

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. If you have a slow or inconvenient Internet connection, you might want to view the resources from a CD-ROM or DVD. Details can be found online at: dr-dave-billiards.com.

This is the sixth article in a series based on the “[The Video Encyclopedia of Pool Practice \(VEPP\)](#),” a five-disc instructional-DVD series I recently created with fellow BD columnist Bob Jewett. VEPP is an organized and methodical training program and pool workout. It teaches you how to develop, assess, and track progress of skills for all facets of your game. An outline of the entire VEPP series along with video excerpts from each DVD can be viewed online at: dr-dave-billiards.com/vepp. Last month, we looked at useful center-of-table drills from Disc II: “[VEPP II – Position Control and English](#).” This month, we’ll look at another type of position control drill, also from the second DVD.

Diagram 1 shows the set-up for a line-of-balls drill useful to practice and develop your position play skills. Nine balls (1 through 9) are lined up about a ball apart along the centerline of the table starting a ball off the end cushion. Starting with cue ball (CB) in hand, the goal is to pocket as many balls as you can in rotation (i.e., in numerical order) in any pockets without disturbing any of the remaining balls. There are many position play options for the first ball, but it is easy to start with basic draw (see the yellow path). The goal is to leave a slight angle on the 2 ball, which leads to a similar position play for the 3-ball (see the blue path). If you don’t leave enough angle on a ball, you can draw straight back off the cushion for good position on the next ball as shown with the 3-ball shot (see the red path). With position above the line to the pocket, as with the 4 ball, a rolling-CB, natural angle path off the end rail, to the other side of the line of balls, is a fairly easy-to-control option. Several position options for the 5-ball (A through D) are shown in the diagram. You could target A to shoot the 6 in the upper side pocket. Alternatively, you could go longer to C, where you could draw back for the 6, or D, where you have decent draw or follow options (albeit, with a longer shot). You definitely want to avoid position B because it would require a bank shot on the 5 to avoid contact with the 6. As you progress through the line of balls, the drill gets easier because the side pockets begin to offer easy shot and position options, as demonstrated in **NV C.8**.

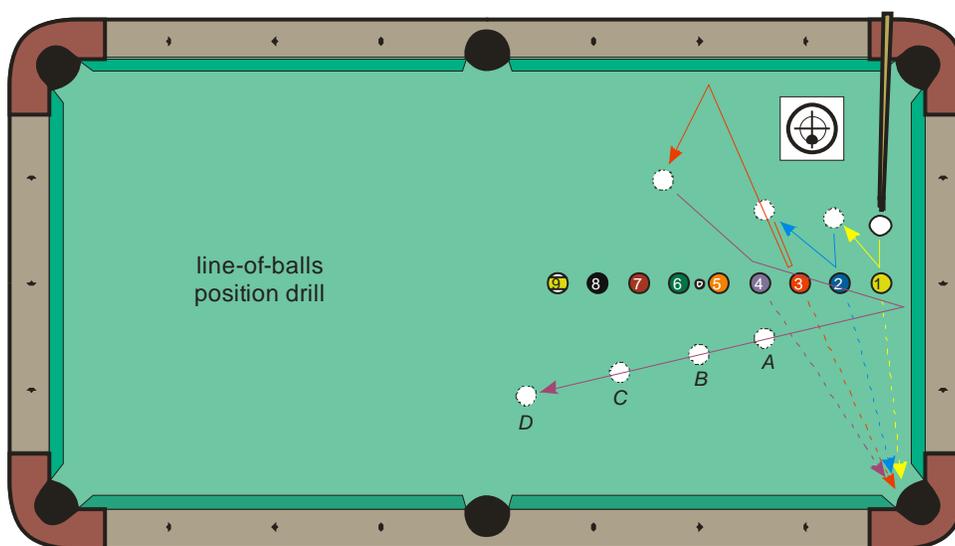


Diagram 1 Line-of-balls position drill

Obviously, you want to avoid bank shots like the plague if you want to be consistently successful with the drill (and with your position play in game situations). When playing for position to pocket one of the drill balls in a corner pocket, you need to make sure you end up above the line through the ball to the pocket. This will allow you to pocket the ball without bumping into the next ball, without needing to resort to a bank. **Diagram 2** illustrates several ways to accomplish this. From position *A*, a simple draw shot is a good option (see the black path). If the shot is straight in (from *B*), a good option is drawing straight back off the side cushion (see the yellow path). If the CB were at *C*, a good option would be to follow forward with running English off two cushions (see the light blue path). If you are above the ball, as in position *D*, a good choice is to follow for a natural-angle path to the other side of the balls (see the purple path). If you are up even higher, at *E*, you can draw off two cushions to help kill the speed for good position (see the red path). A touch of outside English helps create the angle needed. And if the CB were even higher, at *F*, an option is to go up and down the table (see the dark blue path); although, this is a tough shot and much more difficult to control, so it is best to not leave such a steep angle if you can avoid it. These and other options are demonstrated in **NV C.8**.

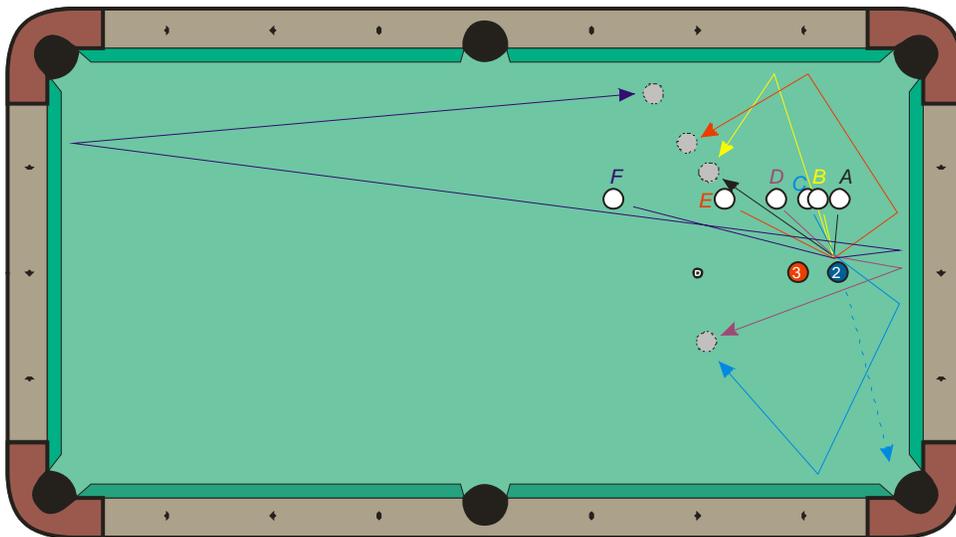


Diagram 2 Path options for position from the 2 ball to the 3 ball

The next time you practice, try all of the position routes illustrated above and demonstrated in the video, try to think of others, and see how well you can do with the drill. As with all of the drills on VEPP, you should record your scores and track your improvement over time. The "[How to Use VEPP](#)" document on the VEPP website contains some sheets to help with this. Scores are useful for assessment and to provide a challenge. You can also use them to set goals for future improvement.

I hope you enjoy and benefit from my series of articles featuring drills from the "[Video Encyclopedia of Pool Practice \(VEPP\)](#)." Example clips from the second VEPP DVD can be viewed on the [VEPP website](#) or at billiards.colostate.edu under **NV C.5** through **NV C.8**. Next month, we'll start looking at useful pattern and safety drills from the third disc.

Good luck with your game,
Dr. Dave



[NV B.74](#) - Center-of-table position and routes, with the 45° rule, from VEPS II

[NV C.5](#) - Wagon wheel cue ball control drill, from VEPP II

[NV C.6](#) - Target practice for position control, from VEPP II

[NV C.7](#) - Center-table position-off-hanger drills, from VEPP II

[NV C.8](#) - Line-of-balls position control drill, from VEPP II

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](#) on my website.

Dr. Dave is author of the book, DVD, and CD-ROM: “[The Illustrated Principles of Pool and Billiards](#),” and co-author of the DVD Series: “[Video Encyclopedia of Pool Shots \(VEPS\)](#)” and “[Video Encyclopedia of Pool Practice \(VEPP\)](#).”