

## CHAPTER VI

### CANNON PLAY

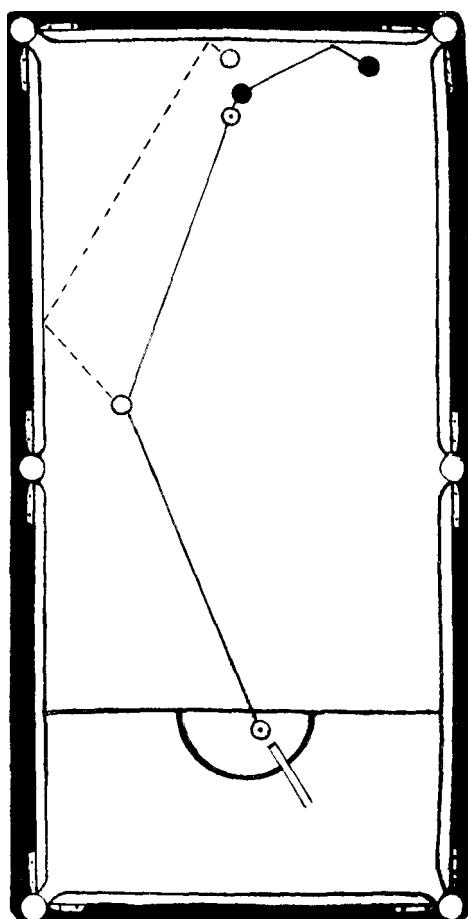
#### THE "DROP" CANNON

THIS stroke is a treacherous one for the unwary. The cannon itself is as simple a shot as could be wished for, but the playing of the stroke correctly is an entirely different matter.

I play the stroke to cannon about a quarter-ball on the red, edging it towards the corner pocket. At the same time I endeavour to bring my opponent's white ball towards the vicinity of the top spot, taking care not to get it below this mark. In fact, it is better that the opponent's ball should lie on the top cushion, for then there would be little fear of a cover -- a thing we all dread in playing this simple-looking shot.

If one cannons too full on the red that ball will come away from the top cushion, the cue ball will most likely rest on the cushion, and failure at the next shot will ensue unless the object white rolls up to leave a loser on. But this is very unlikely. Take care, therefore, to cannon about a quarter-ball on the red.

Probably my readers have read in the reports of billiards matches "So-and-so fell at a simple drop cannon." "Simple," as I have already said, but not so innocent as it looks. Some professionals try to cannon much thinner than a quarter-ball.



That is how they miss the shot. For myself I am quite content with the quarter-ball cannon, and I advise this for amateur players. They, like myself, are usually not endeavoring to set up nursery cannon positions from the "drop" cannon.

There are thousands of amateurs who are magnificent stroke players, but through lack of knowing how to knit the strokes together they never make big breaks. I feel sure that if a close study is made of the different diagrams here there will be definite improvement on the part of those who peruse the book carefully and practise the strokes and methods I give of playing them.

FIG. 14.  
A "DROP" CANNON

### MORE CONCERNING "DROP" CANNONS

My last diagram depicted a "drop" cannon, and the next one, Fig. 15, is another one, but it has to be played in an entirely different manner from the previous.

This cannon is shorter than the last, and instead of making the contact quarter-ball as in the previous example the second ball must be caught full in the face — jammed, as it were, on the cushion. If it is hit half-ball it will come away down the table, leaving the cue ball near the cushion and most likely in an awkward position.

In the last example the first object ball had to be hit half-ball, whereas in this a nearly three-quarter ball contact on the first object is the way I play the stroke, for the reason that it enables me to keep the red ball nearer the corner pocket than if I hit it half-ball.

The two diagrams show a direct contrast in methods of playing an apparently similar stroke. Yet were similar methods applied disaster would follow.

When playing cannons the important thing to remember is to get the right contact on the second ball. That is where the amateur's greatest weakness lies. He almost invariably goes for the cannon without troubling very much over the contacts and the resulting after position — a case of "take the cannon and let the contact go." A "drop" cannon shows this weakness up glaringly.

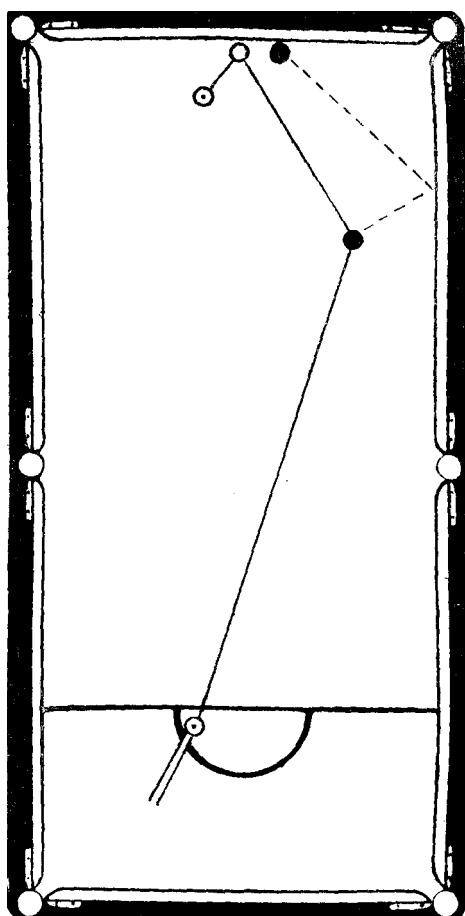


FIG. 15. ANOTHER TYPE OF "DROP" CANNON

Do not think that making the right contact is an easy matter. It is just as difficult in billiards as in business — or socially for that matter. And professionals blunder time and time again at the simple-looking task. Therefore, let the aspiring amateur take heart of grace. He is not the only one who fails at times. We all do -- even we professionals! Only we put a bolder front on our failures and collect our "flukes" solemnly and as to the manner born!

It is important to remember that until one "gets" the angles of the balls played with, to achieve the desired contact is a difficult matter.

Even with the same set of balls used on different grades of cloths the angles vary. All that is required is a slight adjustment in the placing of the cue ball for the stroke. When I am playing club games on different tables day after day I find it necessary to "adjust my angles" frequently.