

TABLE GATHERS

TABLE GATHERS 1 & 2

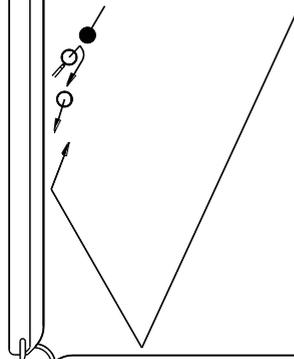
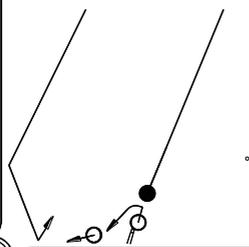
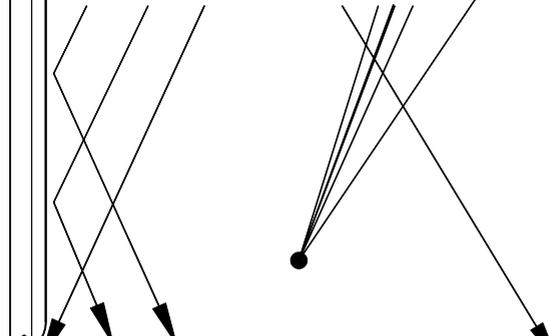
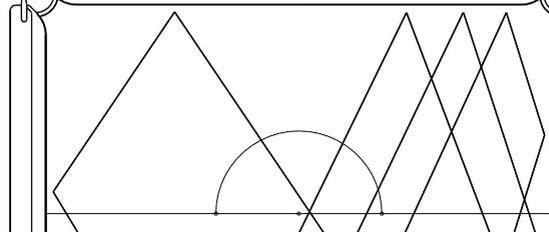
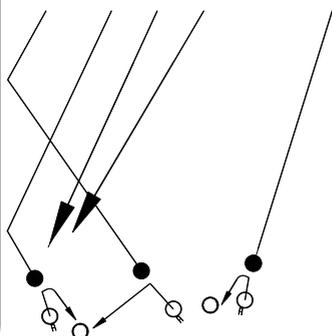
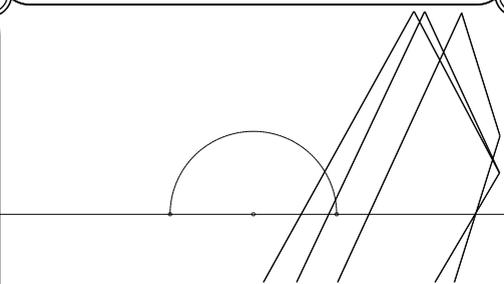
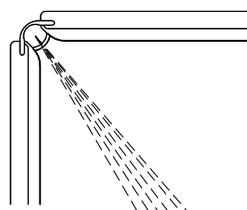
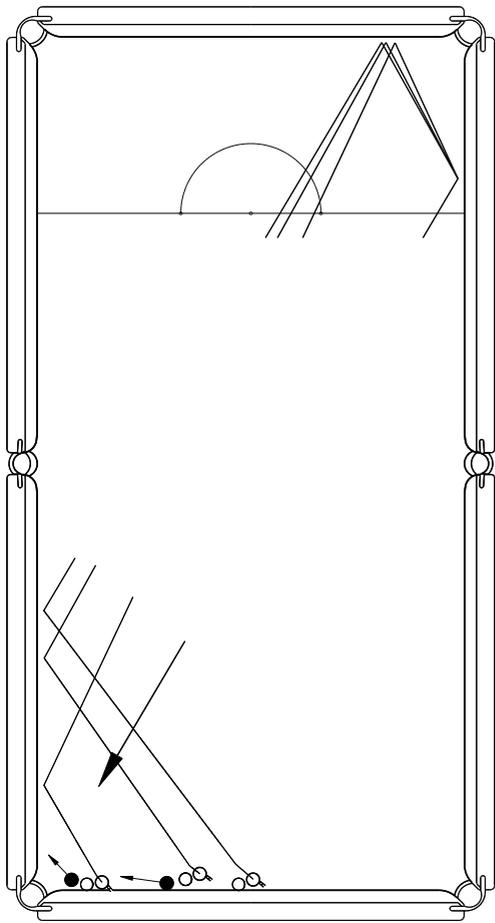


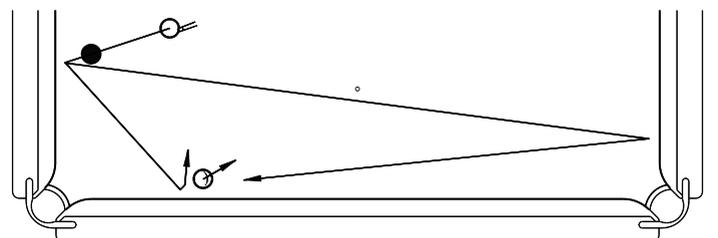
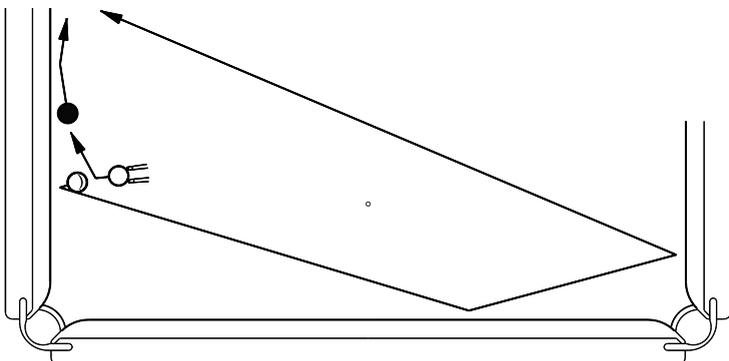
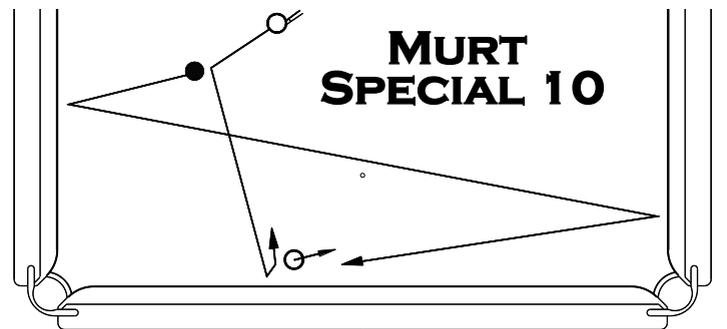
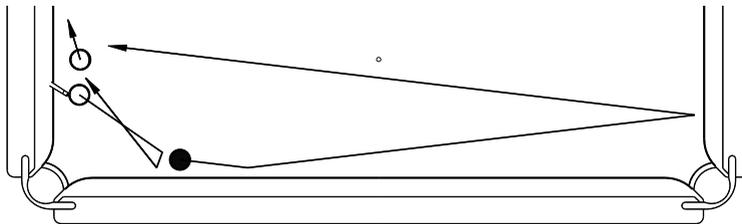
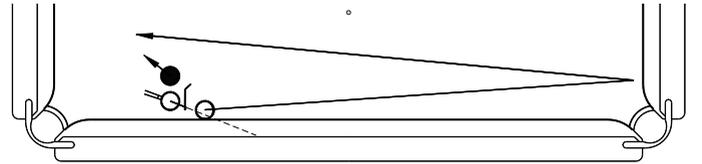
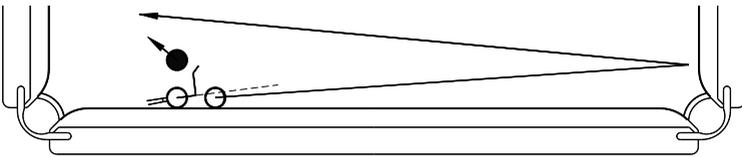
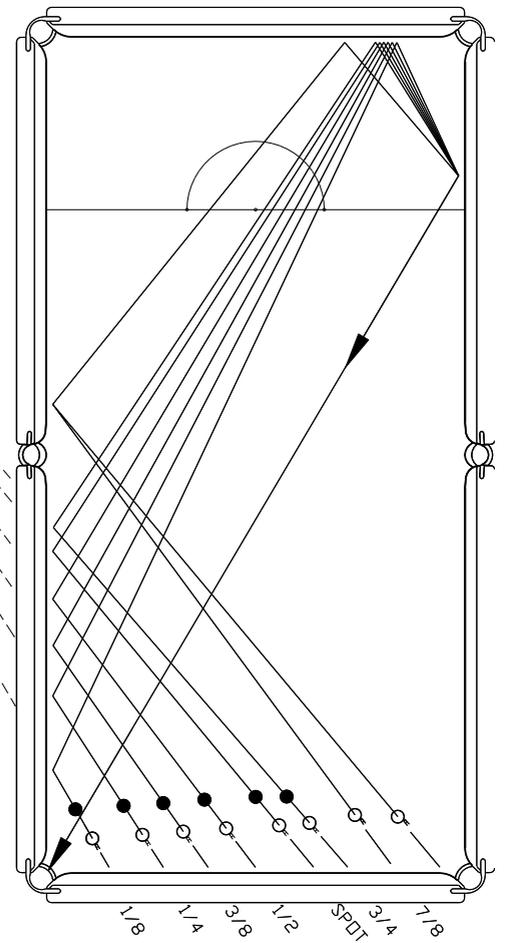
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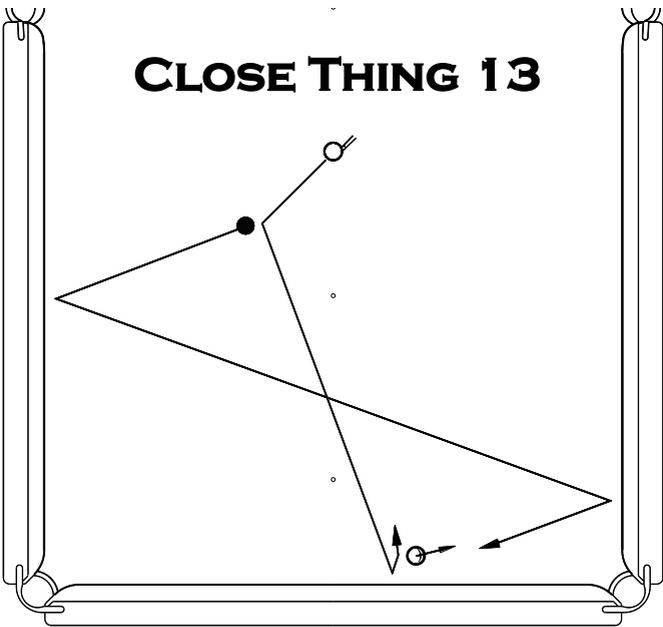


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HALF
3/4

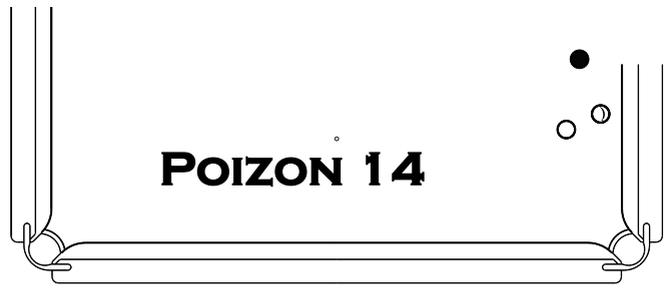


**TABLE
GATHERS
5 & 6
7 & 8
9 & 10
11 & 12**





CLOSE THING 13



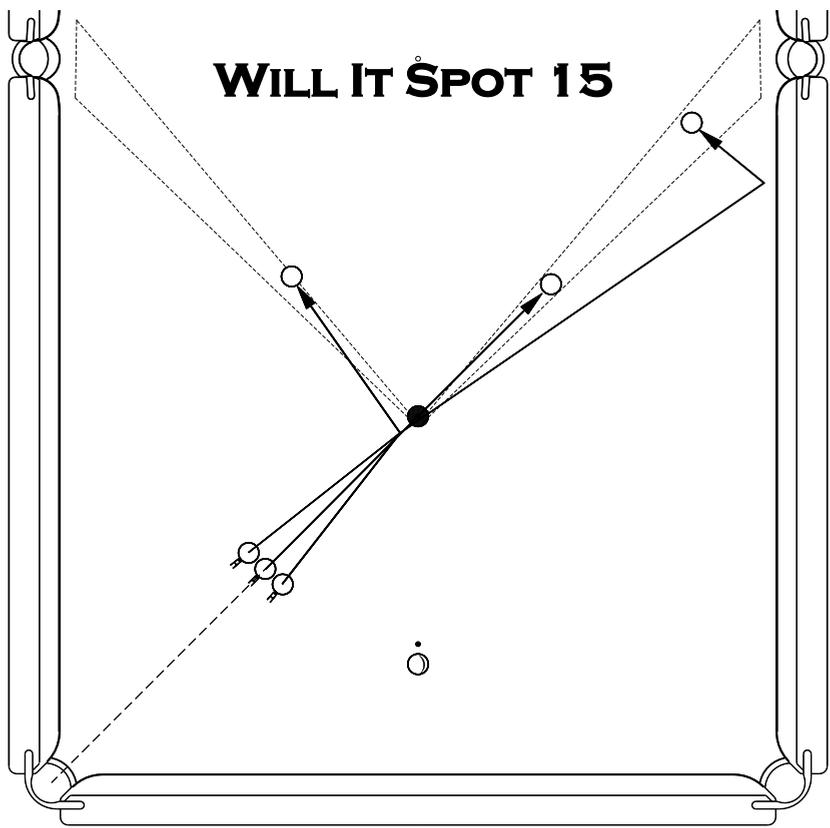
POIZON 14

14 U are tempted to stun cannon yellow to red & to double-double the yellow to gather near the red. But this iz almost allways impossible, u karnt avoid a robbing double-kiss on the yellow. The yellow would hav to be more than 2 balls off the cushion to hav any chance of getting this kind of double-double gather.

13 U will be lucky to avoid the spoiling double-kiss on the red where the paths cross.

WILL IT SPOT 15 Here we hav been playing floating-yellow & we bumped the yellow too close to The Spot. We didn't know whether the red would spot, hence we potted the red to leev the qball on the corner-pocket-to-mid-pocket-line. With the qball in one of the 3 pozzys shown we can pot the red in the middle pocket & leev the qball in a Pink-Gather-Zone by playing a Stun, or a Roll-Throo. Or if the referee duz manage to re-spot the red we will continue with floating-yellow.

THE TIMES, FEB 1930..... *With the break at 388, McConachy drew the referee's attention to the fact that there was not room for the red to be placed on the spot as the object white was so near it. When it was placed on the pyramid spot it made the position much more difficult, but McConachy regained position with a clever cushion cannon, & he was loudly applauded when he completed the fifth hundred.....*



WILL IT SPOT 15

LONG $\frac{3}{4}$ BALL GATHERS 16

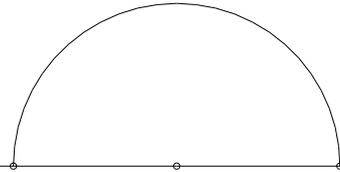


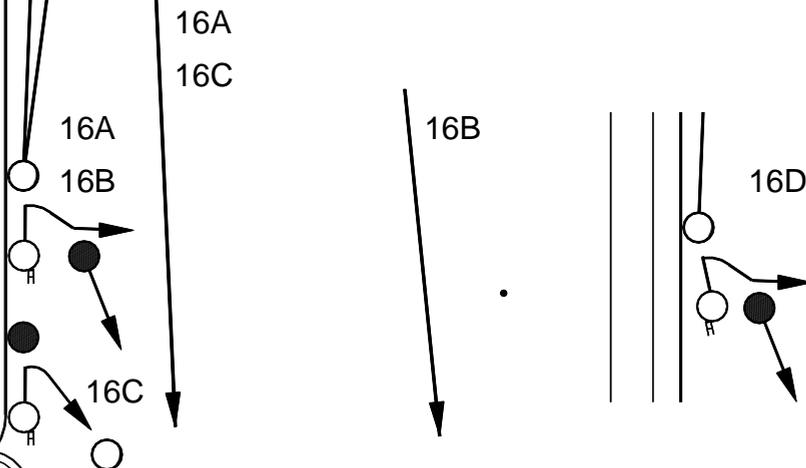
TABLE GATHER 16A Here the yellow & qball are on or near the cushion. We aim at the center of yellow, hitting the qball with screw (not too much) & right-hand-side (not too much), at 4:30 o'clock. Hit hardish, to bring the yellow back.

TABLE GATHER 16B Az for 16A, but we aim a teeny bit right-of-center on yellow, & it kums back to giv nice tott. These types of shots can also be played when the yellow & qball are both off the cushion etc.

TABLE GATHER 16C Here the red & qball are on or near the cushion near the pocket. We aim at the center of red, hitting the qball at 5 o'clock. Hit hardish, to bring the red back for a gather, az for 16A.

TABLE GATHER 16D In the extra drawing, we show the qball a half-ball off the cushion. Here we can get a gather by hitting the yellow a teeny bit left-of-center, with screw & lhs.

TABLE GATHER 16E If the qball in 16D were 1 ball off the cushion (not shown) we would need to aim $\frac{3}{4}$ ball on the left of yellow. Even so, the yellow would be likely to stop nearish theSpot, which iz ok, koz the red will do its best to go there also.



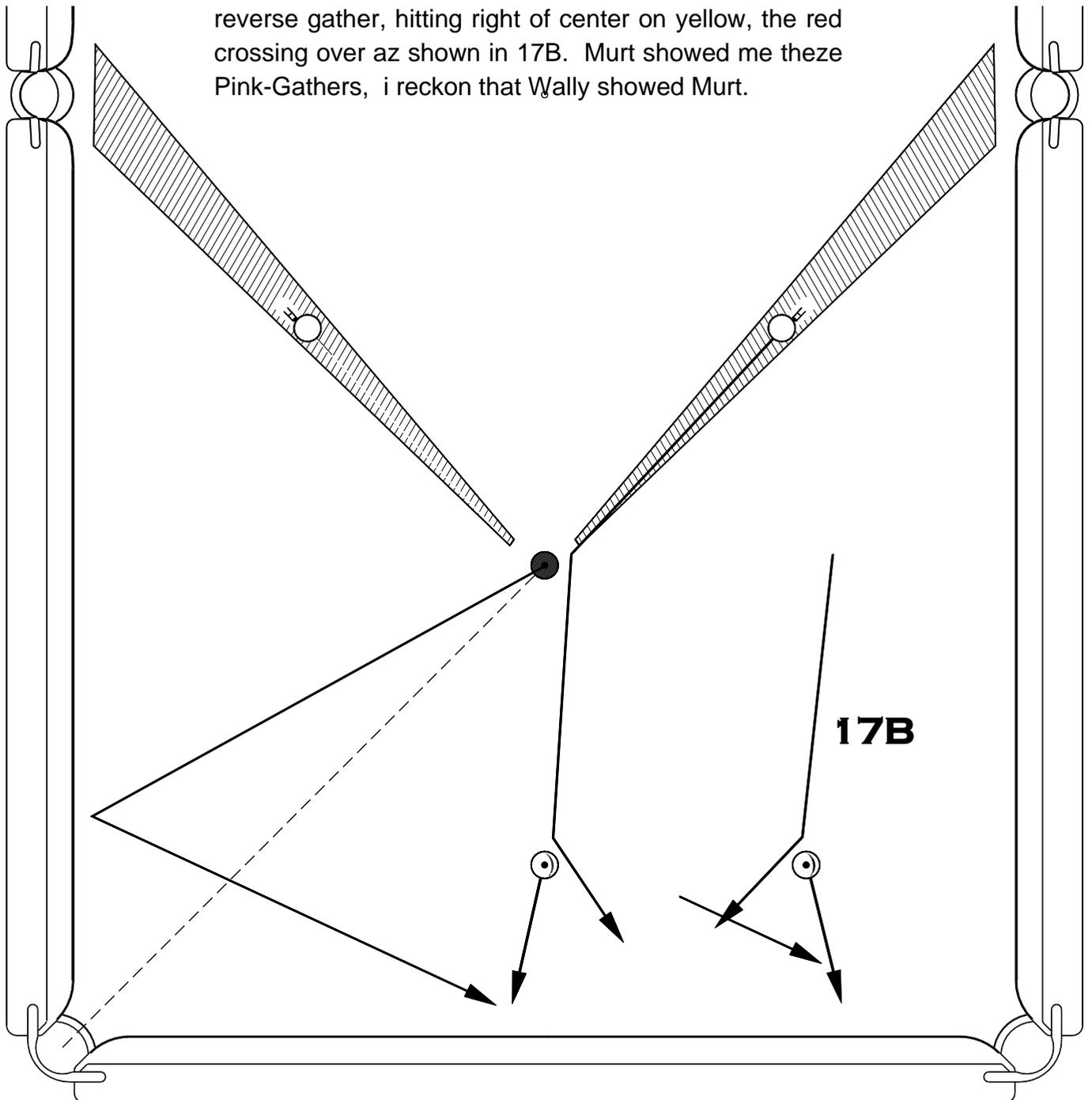
PINK GATHER 17A

U are playing floating-yellow & the yellow covers the Spot, the potted red will now havta go on the Pyramid Spot, the Pink Spot in Snooker (spit), az shown here. The hatched zones show where u kan play a nice gathering cannon to get nurserys, played slower it would leed back to floating-white, but a nice gather iz not difficult. The right-hand zone (left here) iz not very friendly for right-handed players.

The q ball shown iz in the ideal pozzzy, the q ball to red line passes throo the center of the pocket. We hit the red $5/8$ ball, with a bit of lhs, hitting yellow $3/4$ ball, or at least more than $1/2$ ball. The red & yellow are magnetik, if the pace iz good.

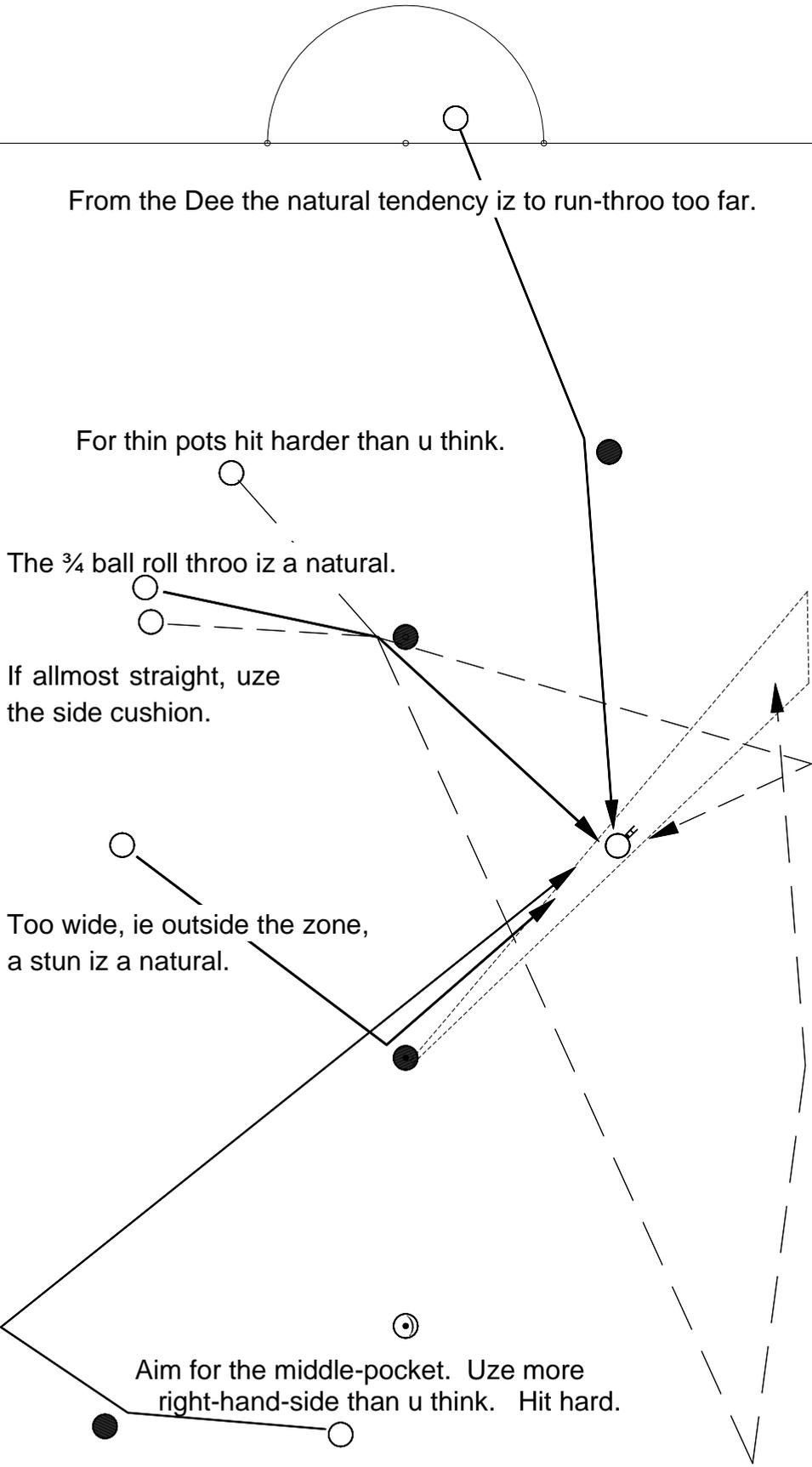
The zone iz very narrow. The widest angle in the zone needs lhs & swerv, hitting the red praps $3/4$ ball (thicker than u think). The narrowest angle in the zone needs rhs & swerv, hitting the red praps $3/4$ ball, in which case the red's trajectory might inklood the top-cushion, & the contact on yellow might be less than $1/2$ ball.

17B If too wide, outside the zone, u might try a reverse gather, hitting right of center on yellow, the red crossing over az shown in 17B. Murt showed me theze Pink-Gathers, i reckon that Wally showed Murt.



GETTING POZZY 18

These are the winners that get u into the zone for Pink-Gathers. The drawn zone iz friendly for Right-Handers, but Leftys will want to uze the mirror image.



JOHN ROBERTS MY BILLIARD IDEAL THE BILLIARD PLAYER AUG 1935 WRITTEN
WHEN THE WIZARD OF THE CUE WAS IN HIS PRIME
DAZZLING ARTISTRY PREFERRED TO REPETITION-STROKE BREAKS

My billiard ideal would, if i had a De Quincey at my elbow, be best expressed in a dissertation upon billiards considered as one of the fine arts. This is making a big claim for the game we love, but i feel compelled to state that my ideal would fain give billiards the glamour of the arts rather than the cold precision of mechanical exactitude or the abstruse intellectual perfection of a mathematical formula. But, objects the iconoclast, your ideal must be shattered by the irrefutable logic of facts. It must be the billiard player's one ideal to win his game by every means the game allows, & it must follow as a logical sequence that the man who can score the greatest number of points in a perfectly fair manner must reach the highest ideal it is possible to offer the cueist.

But i am not quite prepared to admit the infallibility of this argument, for if it is beyond question, then the man who could make the greatest number of spot strokes would be the finest billiard player extant, or, to take a more modern & even more applicable illustration, players who cultivated the notorious anchor stroke could start in their youth & play on until their break was terminated either by the senile decay of the player or the effects of time on the implements. This is scoring if you like, it is making life itself one long drawn out break, it is taking a draft on eternity to achieve the false ideal that continuity of scoring is the Alpha & Omega of billiards.

There is no reason why an anchor break should not become a family inheritance. If it was commenced on a good strong table it might be handed down from father to son even to the third & fourth generation. And when the great, great grandson of the man who originally anchored the balls had brought the family break well into the mazy millions of astronomical calculations, the ideal of the logical cueist would be reached, the scion of the anchor house would have proved what can be done in the way of big breaks, while full-sized oaks would be growing on the grave of the opponent of the first of the family to anchor the balls, & the last trumpet would be the sole means of letting him know that it was his turn to play. Is this a billiard ideal worth living for, worth playing for? I think not. Life is far too short & time too fleeting for us to idealise the player who strives to transform himself into a perpetual scoring machine, & even if we ignore the spot & the anchor it seems to me that the legitimate scoring opportunities afforded by billiards may be strained to a point which spoils the ideal game. Here, i admit, i am on delicate & debatable ground.

It may fairly be argued that if a player makes a plethora of great breaks by supreme positional control of the balls, by orthodox billiards played to perfection, then he is justly entitled to be hailed as champion of champions & to wear the wreath of immortality which belongs to he who approaches close to the ideal in this prosaic world. Again, however, the spirit of doubt disturbs my mind, & tempts me to deny the laurels of fame even to the magnificent cueman who shall compile an amazing plentitude of truly wonderful breaks in point of size made by controlling the balls in a style which seems scarcely human in its sheer perfection of strength & position. Let us watch a player of this type in action with the balls favourably placed for a break. See how he plays the losing hazards until, very quickly, as a rule, the drop cannon presents itself & is accomplished in so masterly a manner that better position for the top-of-the-table game could not be left if the cueist were allowed to pick up the balls & place them where he liked. Then follows the alternating cannon & red winner, or, perchance, a short run of nurseries along the top-cushion until a loser has to be negotiated.

This is played with an effect beyond criticism, once again the drop cannon is worked for, played with supreme skill, & the top-of-the-table game brought forth yet again as a scoring method which cannot be excelled. So the break progresses, hundred follows hundred like bullets from a maxim gun until the human element supervenes at last. Some stroke is not handled with the ultra-perfection of its fellows, the harmony of the break is disturbed, & the player makes way for his adversary after adding to his score a break which takes place of honour in the Press next day. All this is very clever, astonishingly clever, but it is the skill of the craftsman rather than the ideal of the artist which is displayed in such an effort. Such a break, a break abounding in positional perfection, is fearfully & wonderfully made, but its merits lie in the utilisation of the commonplace, it workmanlike rather than artistic, & has but little connection with billiards as a fine art.

Years ago, at the Egyptian Hall, i exploited most of the orthodox scoring methods, until in the course of time i discovered that beyond the drab region of mere skill there lay a realm of beautiful art waiting for its devotees.

This art is difficult to define in words, it is difficult to even show it in one stroke at a time on the billiard table, because so much depends on the time & circumstances. The temple of the highest art in billiards is only open when a man is able to score almost to his heart's content by playing the sound, safe, unshowy game. When a player has reached this stage in his billiard career (& more players have reached it than many people imagine), then he should seek to exercise the creative spirit of the artist rather than the break-building capacity of the workman. To make my meaning as clear as it can be made in words & diagrams, let us imagine that a great player in good form is faced by the leave shown in Diagram 1 after he has made a couple of hundred or so.

It will be seen that the leave presents the easiest of losers in the right top pocket that any player could desire to have if he only wanted a couple of points to win the game of his life. And, furthermore, it is most decidedly sound effective billiards to play the white loser. The red is none too well placed, & if the white loser is handled with ordinary skill the next stroke should offer a good chance of bringing the red into play once again.

But if instead of the profitable & prosy white loser a brilliant screw cannon is effected off the red ball, sending the red speeding round the table like a ray of light until it comes to rest & brings the three balls together in a neat, artistic cluster, the billiard ideal is approached. I know that such a stroke is full of risks, but it is also full of poetry, the charming poetry of motion, &, to my mind, playing it or leaving it alone marks the distinction between a workman & an artist. Another stroke, illustrated by our second diagram, shows the red & the white just nicely clear of the top-cushion & about a yard apart.

The cueball is placed almost as well as it can be for the cannon off the red, & the stroke has to be very badly handled by a first-class exponent if the easiest of white losers into the right-top-pocket is not left after the cannon is made. The red, too, should be brought well within the scoring area in the centre of the table, & no better leave to continue the break could be wished for. But if, instead of this everyday cannon, the stroke is made by playing very full & hard on the red & making the cue ball travel in a half-stunned dreamy fashion along the top-cushion while the red flies round the table & finally comes to rest near the right top pocket in close proximity to the second object-ball, then the billiard artist may justly feel proud of something attempted, something done.

These are the strokes to send the blood tingling through the veins of the spectators, thy reveal the magic of the cue to the ordinary beholder as no amount of mere break building can do, &, to me, they represent the ideal in billiards. In other words, my billiard ideal lies in the direction of playing difficult strokes for the sake of displaying the beauties & possibilities of the game to the best advantage, even when such strokes are not demanded by the immediate positional or scoring requirements of the game. And i should like to point out that this realisation of the ideal of the game beautiful is not without its practical value.

The accomplished cueist who welds these rousing strokes into his ordinary game will seldom be at fault when faced by something extremely difficult in the way of a leave from which a break has to be made. Then the fine art of billiards will come to his assistance, he will reap what he has sown by attempting the highest flights in the game, when a comfortable jog trot would have suited his immediate purpose, & he will learn that the ideal in billiards is worth attempting for its own sake. Last, but by no means least, the spectators are grateful to the billiards idealist, he gives them glimpses of the exquisite possibilities of the game, he shows them something that makes them feel like rising in their seats & breaking out into a cheer, & i think the man who does this is the true artist, the supreme billiard idealist.

