

# RUNALONGS

Tom Reece called the simplest versions of nursery cannons "my little run-alongs". The simplest (but not eezyst) version iz a repeating 1-shot sequence. And there iz a 2-shot version (a number of such versions actually). I reckon that any kind of non-stationary run can be called a runalong. Other names are.... a Run, the Rail, a Rail Nurse, a Nurse, a Nursery, Nurserys, Nursery Cannons, Close Cannons. We hav a chapter for each of seven kinds, & a nice long run will probly need most of them, before u reech the 75 limit. Plus a run might inklood a few (near'nuff) stationary cannons, ie anchors & jams etc. Anyhow most of us are tickled pink to get a short run. But it's like learning to ride a bike, if u kan reech the gate then pretty soon u kan go around the block

## RUNALONG AA

**TOM REECE** DAINTY BILLIARDS (1925)

*Of all the possible strokes along the cushion i prefer the movement shown on Fig 13, which is my own special & characteristic way of tending the balls when i have them where i want them. The position is an open one. Both cue-ball & "outside" object-ball are exactly facing each other & standing upon the 3 ¼ inch "imaginary" line marking the direction the "outside" ball should take. The red ball stands midway between them & well clear of the cushion. The three balls are equidistant &, therefore, present a complete triangle. I know the position "by heart", & it never fails to please me as i may now handle my cue more freely than at most other forms of the close-cannon. This is worth a good deal in comfort & assurance to yourself of being on a favourite tack. I call this series of the little cannons the "run-alongs". You drop "half-ball" (aiming through the centre of the cue-ball on to the edge of the contact side of the "inside" ball) on the latter & gauge the throw-off so that the cue-ball gets full on to the centre of the "outside" ball & keeps it to its allotted line parallel with the cushion. The red ball automatically recovers its relative position to the other two balls & the three again set up a triangle. I play these shots faster & with more certainty than any. Often i have pieced together the allotted limit of 25 cannons & still had them triangularly set. As a relief to the tip-tap-toe! in-&-out-&-around-about tiny shots i know of nothing to equal my "run-alongs" while the balls are at close range. Quite the leading feature about them is their requiring none of the difficulties accompanying the use of "side" or any compound actions of the cue-ball. The only stroke used is the plain centre-ball which gives the simple over-&-over rolling -- the safest & soundest a billiard ball may carry....*

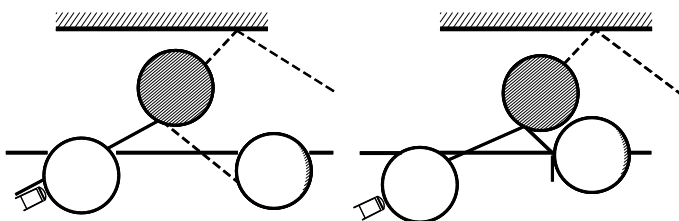


Fig 13 My little run-alongs. Plain half-ball shots, keeping equal distance between the balls all the time. Fig 13A Another & somewhat similar type of the "run-alongs" played exactly the same way.

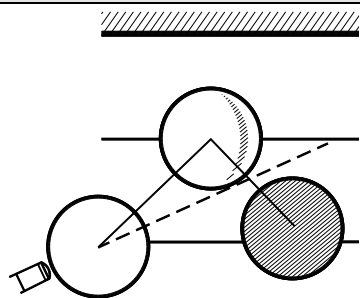
.... I call the cannons (as already stated) which arise from these inspired moments "the run-alongs". It is because i drive the balls directly forward &

there are no complications, such as "kisses" & checks, but a series of shots in which the balls operate freely, without impeding each other, that i give these shots this title. It is quite descriptive of their doings as they each run along several inches at every shot by the cushion, & assume much the same relative position on stopping as in the first place. I have known myself to score twenty & more shots consecutively of this exceptional pattern, & to feel very well satisfied at being capable of leaving, if only temporarily, the conventional forms of close-cannon & doing something of a specialist character. When the pure plain-ball strikings cannot comply with the demands of the shot, the cueball stands a most willing & able servant to do your bidding. It can carry out any & every message you are able to entrust it with. More faithful a bearer of its patron's whims, wishes, capacity & incapacity of employment of the motions best fitted to bring about a well-served cannon there could not be, for the stroke upon a billiard ball is the truest reflection of the striker's knowledge & ability to put it into execution. Thus, the tiny "side-spins", "screws", "toppings", & more mixed revolutions of the cue-ball which come with the needed departure from plain-ball strikings, enter into a higher class of play altogether. One of the most beneficial strokes to be used by the close-cannon expert is the "screw". It enables him to send the cue-ball very squarely across the object-balls, to steer it clear of them & gain a comparatively free position on the open side of the outside object-ball, & generally assist the easy sequence of the strokes. One particular variation of the "screw", namely when the cue is held high & the cue-ball struck from above or its rear-top (that is, at the back of its top-centre), gives the player great help. It simplifies the shot tremendously when the cue-ball lies nearly touching the first object. By what is known as the pique the cue-ball can make the stroke quite strongly, & safeguard against touching, yet give no undue rolling to the balls..... The cannon expert, as may be understood, has to be a clever cueist to give the necessary motions to his ball at the lowest speed of stroke.....Long experience & much experiment have proved that the real secret of working the balls along a cushion is correct contact with the object-ball lying nearest the cushion.....It is far better to be too strong than to make those fiddling & nervous touches which seem to be so common when the little cannons come on the scene..... No half-hearted striking will do...The chief thing to remember, both in quiet practice or the more exciting & disturbing competitive match, is to try to cue in precisely the same way for every shot...As can be found by trying these lowest-pace strokes at the little close-cannons the tendency is to hit your ball too hard, not to hit it at all, to miss-cue or "go off half-cock" -- any one of which set of likely faults can completely wreck the close-cannon positions &, often, mean the worst trouble that can happen in a failure to score. There is nothing to be ashamed of about any of these mistakes. I wonder how many times the same accidents have happened to me -- yes, & may happen again at any time -- when i was training myself to the close-cannons &, later, if out of practice or, perhaps, in a game owing to momentary lack of concentration?.....The good player's outlook is for the next shot, the one after that, & now & again, three, four, five & even six shots ahead of him. When i am nicely settled down to a run of the close-cannons i can see the positions the balls will take because i have trained myself to an almost automatic degree of

accuracy, both in the strength of stroke & the contacts between the balls. Let me repeat the necessity of trying to send the balls so as to gain the easiest scoring placings to follow on at. Actually, in playing for position the player may ask himself as to how & where he prefers to have the balls left for his next shot. And it is up to him to send them to he selected positions..... What may be equally interesting for my readers is that my own original way of playing the cannons differs from the methods of other renowned experts. It is because i am aware how my own plain, simple game is best suited to the ordinary, everyday type of player that i have consented to put my close-cannon experiences in the present book-form.

**MY COMMENTS** Fig 13 iz not possible. If u moov all 3 balls further from the cushion, then it iz possible, for 1 or 2 shots. But, even so, a pure run of say only 3 shots iz next to impossible in this sort of arrangement. If u moov the qball & the red in closer to the yellow, likewise. In a few minutes of trying u might eventually get a run of say 3. If u allow an early-double-kiss on red, it kan work more often (a sort of Kiss-Along). And if u allow the red to kiss the yellow (which must be what Tom did), it kan work more often more often. And if u throw in the early-double-kiss plus a kiss on the yellow, then even more so. But at shortish range u never really know which of these four rezults will occur. And, touching-balls begins to raize its ugly head. And, like i sed, at longish range, a run iznt possible. All of which shows that someone lied. Woz it the draftsman, or the ghost writer, or woz it Tom? Anyhow i found that a pozzy in between 13 & 13A iz ok. I will call this RunAlong AA. **DOLLY** told me that the Reece's were a luvrly couple. Dolly sed that Wally sed that it woz embarrassing the way that they were allways fighting. For instance at dinner Mrs Tom would say....

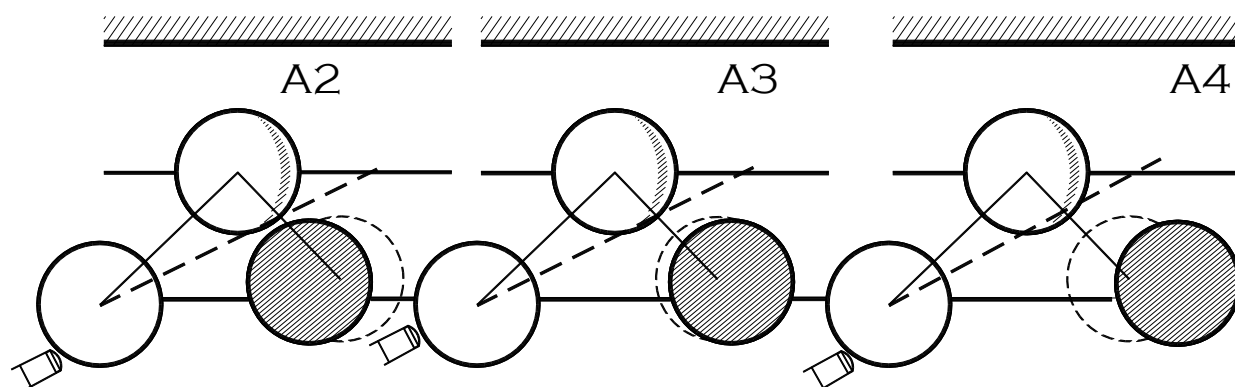
**Tom pleez pass the salt, if it won't spoil your touch.**



**RUNALONG A1** For RunAlongs AA & BB draw chalk-lines 1 ball & 2 balls from the topcush to help place the balls. Or uze some other cushion, we don't want to ruin the tott area. The 3 balls form a 90° angl at 45° to the cush. The qball iz a little over 1½ balls from the cush, ie a little south of the 2<sup>nd</sup> line. The red iz a little under 1½ balls. The yellow iz exactly a ½ ball off, ie on the line. A nice halfball

plainball cannon leevs the same shape/pozzy, if strength iz good. The balls moov along about one-ball-dia per cannon. No double-kiss iz needed on yellow. U might prefer a slight varyation, where the yellow often givs the red a little kiss at the end. If so then hit yellow thicker, with running. U kan play AA closer to the cush than shown in the drawing, & with the balls closer together, in which case u will eat less cush per cannon. But the closer u get to the cush the more ticklish things get. U will be in TouchAlong territory. Anyhow find the pozzy that works best for u on yor table. And the top-cush plays differently to others koz of the nap of the bedcloth & koz of the nap of the cushcloth. These drawings are for a right-hander. Anyhow, having found a good placement of the balls, mark the 3 pozzys with chalkdots, & also tap the 3 balls lightly on the head so that they kan be replaced eezyly. If the first cannon from AA iz ok then play from where the balls stopped & keep going. If hopeless, start again at the chalkspots. For each first shot from the chalkspots yor only problem is strength, supposedly. Even so only say 1 in 10 attempts are very good. But don't worry u kan hav long runs anyhow. That's what we look at next.

**STEERS-MAN-SHIP** Az u praktis AA etc u are learning to recognize aim & strength (touch). U recognize when plainball won't do the trick, & when u need some side or swerv. Sometimes driving the balls a long way ahead duz the trick. In this chapter we look at twelve AA pozzys where we hav strayed. I misplaced the yellow 3 ways, & the red 3 ways, & the qball 6 ways. And i experimented to find the simplest way of regaining good AA pozzy or nearly in one shot if possible. I don't expect anyone to memorize drawings, & anyhow we could draw another 100 AA varyations, & anyhow praps there are better ways. Some pozzys are eezyer than they look, koz the balls are short-sighted (Gazdag). Close cannons are a new world.

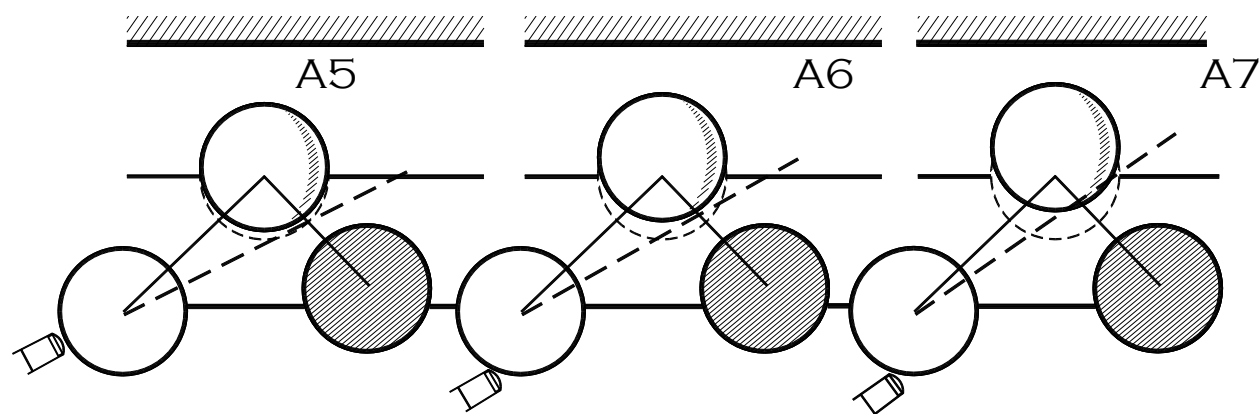


In A2 A3 & A4 the yellow & qball are in A1 pozzy, but the red iz awry.

**A2** Play az in AA. But if u are worried that u will hit red first u kan aim thick halfball on yellow & uze running az shown. Koz u are uzing running-side u will havta hit a little harder. In theze drawings the broken red ball shows the ideal A1 pozzy that haz been lost. The rezulting leevs are not shown, but they are rarely exactly A1.

**A3** Play a thickish half-ball, no side. Hit a little softer than in A1.

**A4** Here aim very thick halfball with running. The yellow will try its best to get to the red and bump it away, so strength iz critical. Concentrate on the pace of the qball, not the yellow. Concentrate on bumping the red 20mm & the yellow will look after itself.



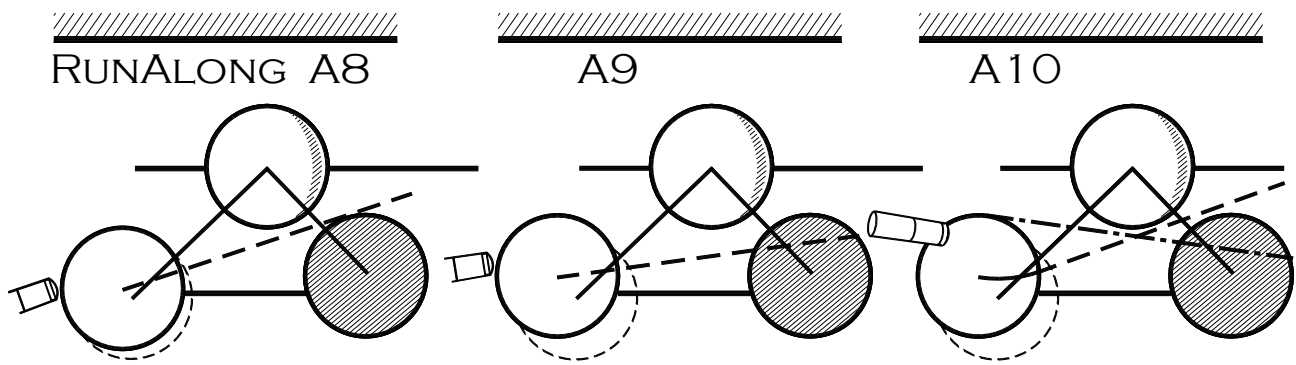
In A5 A6 & A7 the red and qball are in A1 pozzy but the yellow iz awry.

**A5** Play half-ball az in A1, but softer.

**A6** Play half-ball with maximum of running to get a late double-kiss off the yellow (ie qball hits YRY). Hit harder than in A1.

**A7** There iz little chance of getting a good A1 leev. U might az well play thick half-

ball, hardish, with maximum running-side to get a double-kiss, which might be an early one (YYR) or a late one (YRY), & see what happens. Actually if u kum back to A7 after reading the later chapters u should be able to kum up with 3 or 4 ways safer ways (seqences) of handling this.

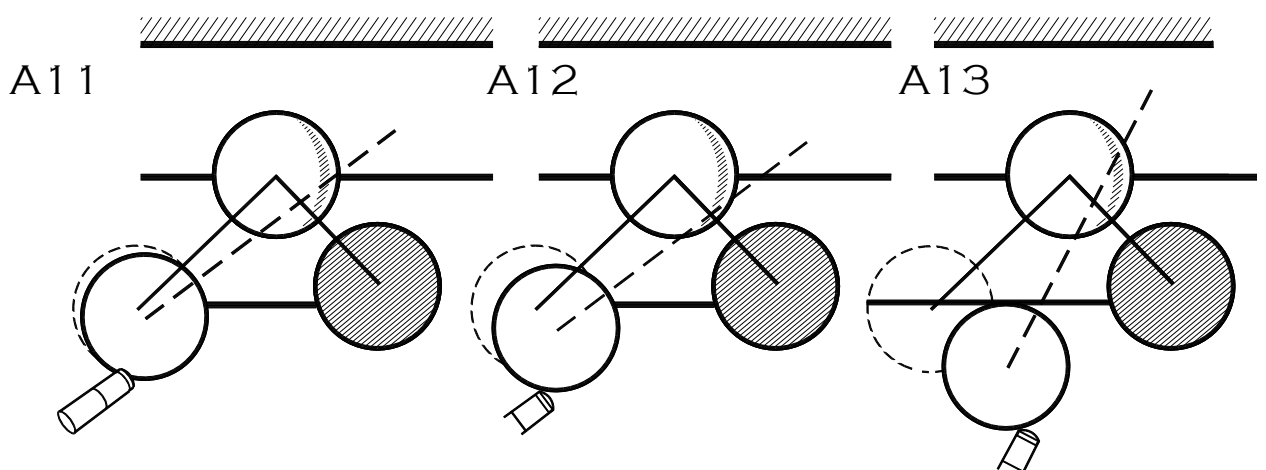


In A8 A9 & A10 the red and yellow are in A1 pozzly but the qball iz awry.

**A8** The qball iz on the line instead of just below. Play thin half-ball with check. A few thorts re A8. The qball iz closer to the cush than in A1, & a halfball contact on yellow would drive yellow ahead more than in A1, & the thin contact will prevent this. The thin halfball contact givs the qball a wider angle off the yellow (wider than what the halfball in A1 givs). We don't need and don't want this wider angle. This wider angle after a thinner contact iz contrary to one's gut feeling (see ch71 Deflexion Angles). In addition to the wider deflexion angle the narrower starting point for the qball (the qball iz closer to the cushion than in A1) of itself givs a wider angle off the yellow. A double dose of wider, which we don't need and don't want. This iz why check helps. The check reaction on the red slows the qball & keeps the qball closer to the cushion. The check narrows the deflexion angle off the yellow a little, & allso off the red a little, but the slowing is the main thing. Fellow cushion-crawler **ROGER BUCKMASTER** (Melbourne) gets good runs by uzing lots of check for almost every stroke. And, check helps to avoid touching balls when the bed nap iz slowish. And check iz a great help when running the balls down the side cush against the nap.

**A9** The qball iz above the line, level with red. Play quarter-ball with maximum check. U will be lucky to keep AAish pozzly. Strength needs to be perfikt, az uzual.

**A10** This pozzly iz identical to A9. A swerv kan bring the qball onto the yellow on the same line az the halfball shot in A1 (but thin halfball is better)(shown).



In A11 A12 & A13 the red and yellow are in A1 pozzly but the qball iz awry.

**A11** Play three-quarter ball with running & swerve.

**A12** Play thick halfball with running to get the late double-kiss off yellow. Hit hardish. In a late double-kiss the yellow kisses the qball after the qball haz hit the red (ie the qball's kisses are YRY).

**A13** If u want to retain A1-ish pozzly, play three-quarter ball with running to get a late double-kiss on yellow. Hit hard. U will need lotsa luck, its probly best to play something else rather than breaking yor neck to regain A1.

In pozzys **A2** to **A13** only one ball woz awry. We did not look at pozzys where 2 balls are awry, or all 3, but the principles are the same. Don't risk touching balls etc to keep AA going. If the balls are too close together & if u karnt play a direkt shot then a half of yor options are gone, praps all ovem. So a healthy bump iz best.

### DRILL AA

Set the balls in **A14B** pozzly. The yellow iz  $\frac{1}{2}$  ball off the cushion, the qball & red are  $1\frac{1}{2}$  balls off & 1 ball apart. In effekt the 3 balls are on a 1 ball line & a 2 ball line (but don't draw any lines). **A14A** shows how. Put

yellow on the cushion, & qball touching yellow at  $90^\circ$ , & red touching both at  $30^\circ$ . While holding red, put yellow outside the red at  $90^\circ$ . While holding yellow, put red next to yellow at  $00^\circ$ , & put the qball next to the yellow at  $00^\circ$  also. Lastly roll yellow towards the cushion untill the edge of the yellow iz level with the edge-to-edge line of the qball & red. Check that the balls are equidistant & symmetrical.

**RUNALONG A14C** The **A14B** pozzly looks too wide to an old redball player but A14C shows that a simple plainball cannon givs a good leev (broken balls). If u place the qball touching the yellow on the halfball line (dotty ball) u will see that the qball to red angle aint az horribly wide az u thunk. In fakt if u kontakt the yellow **THINNER** than halfball u will keep the red closer to the cush (not shown). But a thin kontakt will leev the yellow behind (not shown).

The leev iz good if **STRENGTH** iz good (az uzual). Too strong & the yellow kums out too far & blocks your next cannon (not shown). Too weak & u leev the yellow behind (not shown).

**EXPERIMENT** Right-side & a thicker kontakt kan giv a better leev, but judgement of strength iz then more difficult. And sidespin allways risks a **MISSCUE**, koz we rarely chalk-up enuff. And set up **A14C** where u need to **REEECH-OUT-&-BACK**, while holding the cue with a death-grip near midpoint, koz this iz what u might get in a game.

