

The Duchess's Domain

by Allison Fisher

Snooker vs. Pool

Hi everyone! I would like to talk about my experiences when I switched from playing snooker to pool and the differences I encountered. After a lifetime of playing snooker, in 1995 I made the switch to playing pool, 9-ball in particular. There are some significant differences that I observed as I made the transition, and I'll point out several. A snooker player approaches the table differently and uses some different mechanical movements than a pool player.

Snooker began in India, which was at the time a British colony, by officers stationed there. The game utilizes 15 red balls and 6 balls of other colors. The object in snooker is to score the most points. The red balls are worth one point each, and the other colored balls are worth from two to seven points apiece. The reds stay down as they are pocketed, and the colored balls are re-spotted when they are pocketed. The game is played on a 12' x 6' table with narrow pockets and uses smaller, lighter balls than those used in pool.

It took me a while to get used to the reaction of the object and cue balls as they came off a rail. The rails are cut differently and, therefore, they respond differently. In snooker, more stun shots and draw shots are used, whereas in pool, because they can spin the ball easier, a pool player tend to use more rails and topspin. The age of the cloth you are playing on will make a difference. If you are playing on a new cloth, the ball tends to slide (skid) more, and spin reacts differently and is harder to control.

The cloth on a snooker table is directional and has a nap. This type of cloth has a long "playing life," which is important to the room owners. This makes the game a little more difficult to play, as you have to allow for a roll when shooting slow shots against the nap. For example, when shooting in to the side pocket going against the nap, you will have to aim about an inch or two from the pocket, and the ball will curve in. The cloth that the professionals play on in televised events is

shaved twice, making it faster and removing the nap. This type of cloth removes the need to compensate for the nap when aiming.

My snooker cue is 54 inches in length, weighs 19 ounces, and had a 10-millimeter tip when new. Over the years I wore it down to 9 millimeters. My Cuetec pool cue, by contrast, weighs 18 ounces, and is 56 inches in length. I initially used a 11 3/4-millimeter tip but found I didn't like it, as I wasn't controlling spin very well. To

improve this, I switched to a 13-millimeter tip. Snooker players in general hold the cue near to the butt, which is why cues tend to be a person's shoulder height on average. The cues are generally made from ash and ebony, maple and ebony, or rosewood, and have a brass ferrule. Pool players very seldom hold a cue at the end or near the butt. They tend to hold the cue somewhere on the wrap.

At the time I was playing snooker, 90 percent of the players stood squarely at the table and faced the shot. Steve Davis, a top player who dominated throughout the 1980s, influenced this. He had everything in line, from his elbow through his head and down to his right leg. Joe Davis (not related), who dominated snooker several decades prior, sighted under his left eye and consequently stood more like a pool player stands. He had a straight left arm and positioned his feet differently than snooker players of today. His left foot would point parallel to the line of the shot and his right turned out about 60 degrees, opening his stance up.

Probably around 90 percent of all *snooker* players, including myself, have a slight hesitation at the back of their stroke that enables me to get my eyes focused on the object ball prior to my final delivery. Ninety percent of all *pool* players have their hesitation at the front of the stroke. Either is

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Steve Davis, many-time world snooker champion, keeps everything in line from his head through his elbow, wrist, right leg, and foot.

fine as long as there is a good rhythm and understanding of what you are doing.

One of the hardest differences to overcome between the two games is that while at snooker you get rewarded for scoring points, in 9-ball only the 9 ball counts. Mentally, the games are very different. In snooker it is easy to be defensive, whereas in 9-ball you need to be able to play offense, as safety play can be very difficult, especially with the jump shot being legal.

If you have any questions you would like answered, you may send them to: Allison@InsidePool.com. ♦

Considered by many to be the leading lady in women's pool today, Allison Fisher started her illustrious pool career by winning the World Snooker Championship at the age of 17. She continued playing snooker and living in England for the next ten years, accumulating a stunning array of titles. In 1995, Allison relocated to the U.S., where her domination continues on the women's pro tour. She currently resides in Charlotte, NC, and has recently become a BCA-certified instructor. Her countless collection of awards, titles, and championships have made Allison one of the most popular and well-respected players in the game today.

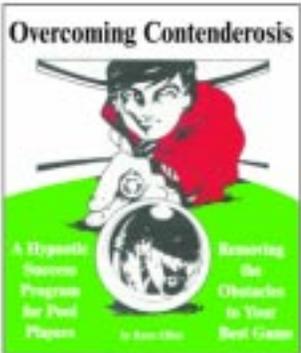
fessional trainer. You can read about Suzanne's remarkable story on my web site www.themonk.com.

Enjoy the shot-making experience in your journey. Look for the tough shot. Welcome the tough shot. Do not be afraid of it. From now on I want you to believe that two things will happen when you line up for a tough money ball, and two things only. One, you will make the shot. Two, you will miss the shot. You are not sure which one it will be. You are certain, however, of one thing that you can do. That is, you can look good shooting the tough shot. Sharpen your skills. Enjoy your time in the shot-making stage.

I cannot walk in your place. I cannot do the work for you. I cannot help you avoid the training and development you must experience. I can, however, point the way for you. May all the rolls go your way. ♦

Tim Miller, known all over the world as "The Monk," has authored several books and is considered one of the industry's elite instructors. Tim's instructional columns have been featured on many of the pool world's top websites. He is currently traveling through the U.S. with his revolutionary "Monk 101" tour, which consists of a series of workshops designed to help players of all levels improve their game.

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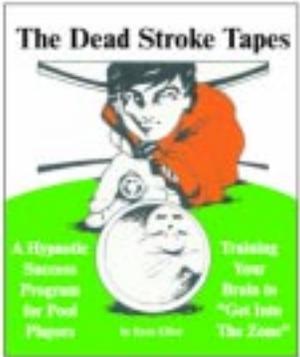


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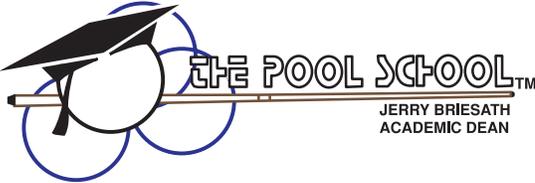
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