

Ask Allison

by Allison Fisher

Improving Your English

Hi everyone! Thanks for writing to me with your questions. You can contact me via e-mail through my website www.allisonfisher.com or at askallison@allisonfisher.com

Many players over the years have come up to me or written that they have a problem using english (especially left or right) on the cue ball. I recommend for any standard of player that they learn what they can do with the cue ball just using the center vertical axis of the cue ball before even contemplating the use of side spin, as it is referred to in the game of snooker.

You will be surprised at the results. Just by varying the tip position on the cue ball if you have an angle on the object ball, you can practically get to most places on the table using the vertical axis.

When I teach players about side spin, I first get them to shoot the cue ball from the spot where the 1 ball usually sits to the end rail in a straight line. They apply maximum side spin on the cue ball, first hitting it hard and then hitting it soft. Prior to doing this, I ask them where they think the cue ball will contact the end rail with the two speeds. What I am trying to accomplish is to get the players familiar with their own cues. I have met players who own many cues and change regularly. This is not beneficial, as cues hit and deflect differently depending on the brand. Some cues now have no deflection, and some have quite a bit. When you do the exercise above, you will see how your own cue deflects. When I hit a ball hard with side spin, my cue ball contacts the end rail about one ball's width from where I have aimed. Therefore, when I play a hard side spin shot, I have to compensate accordingly. When I play a slow spin shot, I have to compensate not for deflection so much but for throw. For example, if I play a soft shot with outside or running english, I would aim at my object ball slightly thicker than usual to make the shot, because when the two balls contact each other, the spin will throw the object ball in the opposite direction. Remember the slower the shot, the more the spin will react, whether you are contacting an object ball or even a rail. If I hit a ball with side spin hard into the rail,

the spin will hardly take effect whereas a slow spin in to the rail really reacts. The use of side spin makes the game much harder, so don't run before you can walk. Really get to know what you can do with the cue ball without side spin, and then practice and watch the reaction of the cue ball before it contacts the object ball and then watch the reaction between the two balls.

I am just going to list a few major things that everyone should do to enhance their game:

1. Stay down on the shot.

I think this is the most common error that I see. In order to get disciplined at this, you need to exaggerate doing this in practice until it becomes natural to you.

2. Slow back swing before final delivery.

I see many players, including myself, not doing this on occasion. If you rush the stroke, you have no chance to get your eyes focused on the object ball, and your timing is ruined because your muscle memory has changed.

3. Form a routine.

It is important to have a ritual or routine to keep you focused on the task at hand.

This includes a pre-shot routine and a routine during your warm-up strokes and delivery.

Find out what yours is, and if you don't have one, create one! Good luck everyone! ♦

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.



In order to enhance your game, stay down on the shot, slow your back swing down before final delivery, and form a routine to keep yourself focused.