

Ask Allison

by Allison Fisher

Billiards Digestion

Hi everyone! Remember to send me e-mail to my web site at www.allisonfisher.com if you have any questions about pool, and I will do my best to answer them.

I just returned from the U.S. Open, where I had my worst finish in a long time. Since the beginning of 2003, the WPBA has changed their format to an alternating break. Obviously this means that you have to be ready to perform your best pool from the beginning to the end of an event, and it so important to win the games when you break. It is also very nice to steal some from your opponent on their break.

This has changed the outcome of many matches. Whereas the average match used to be 9-4 with the winner breaking, it is now closer to 9-6 with alternating breaks. I think it has made the events much more exciting and puts a lot of pressure on the players to perform. Additionally, there are many great young players out there who want scalps.

I could think of quite a few excuses for not performing well, but at the end of the day I am the one to blame. However, I did notice for the first time how eating a little too much and too near the game's starting time had a big effect on me. I found that I wasn't thinking clearly because my body was more focused on digestion. My whole concentration was affected. I found myself getting annoyed because I couldn't do what I usually can do. It was a big awakening. Maybe years ago those sorts of things didn't affect me like they do now. I recently read an article in a magazine featuring top players, and they all mentioned eating prior to matches. They prefer to eat maybe 3 or 4 hours prior. You would think after all these years of playing, I would know better. It is not only when you eat but also what you eat that affects your body differently. I especially noticed this in Las Vegas when teaching at the APA National Championship in August. It is amazing what you notice if you start paying attention to your body. The best thing that you can do is to eat lightly foods that are easily digestible.



Allison learned the hard way at the recent U.S. Open that it's best to eat light before a big match.

The next thing I want to mention is practice. I get asked very often how to practice. The question you need to ask yourself is, How long can I devote to playing every week? If it were less than 5 hours, I would probably do high-quality practice on my own. If it were 10 hours, I would probably do around 75% solo practice. When I was younger and played snooker, I used to practice 4 hours per day on my own, and in order to keep my interest,

I practiced drills for certain lengths of time. I think the important thing about solo practice is not to be goal oriented but method oriented. When you practice on your own, you are very conscious of everything that you are doing, which is extremely important for improvement. You can focus on certain aspects of your whole game. When I am at a table, I focus solely on my mechanics and awareness. I do drills, but when I do them I am very aware of my whole body from stance to delivery of the cue. The reason for practicing like this is that when you are in a match and under enormous pressure, your mechanics are what carry you through. If you

have flaws in them, you will likely fold under pressure. My advice is to be totally aware of everything that you do and work at it all of the time. ♦

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.

