

Ask Allison

by Allison Fisher



Another Piece of the Puzzle

Hi everyone, and thanks for writing to me. Please send any questions to me through my website, www.allisonfisher.com.

In my last article I wrote about the 4 T's—Technique, Timing, Temperament, Talent, and Luck. These are some ingredients that contribute to making a good player. I received a question from someone saying that they haven't played pool for two years and in a recent match struggled and played a couple of levels below their standard. I can only say that if I had not played in two years, I would not expect to be great instantly. I am sure it would take a lot of patience and quality practice to get everything back to where it was. I would suggest breaking down the game piece by piece. I cannot stress enough how important good mechanics are. Every top player has his or her own rhythm that is unique, but it is the same for every shot. That is what creates consistency. If you watch players like Efren Reyes in slow motion, you will see that his timing is the same for every shot.

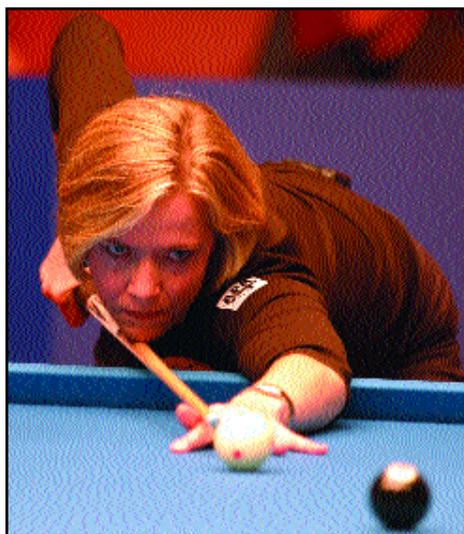
I asked Stephen Hendry, a top snooker player, many years ago how long it takes him after a summer break to get up to full speed with his game, and he reported about 3-6 weeks. That is after probably a couple of months off from playing. However, here is a player who is one of the most talented players ever and has played a minimum of 6 hours a day for most of his career. He is also someone who has flawless mechanics. When I talk about rhythm, I am relating to timing, from the warm-up strokes to the final cue delivery. The muscles are trained to differentiate between the biceps and triceps with our stroke. If you have taken a long break, chances are that the muscles have forgotten what they are supposed to do and need to be retrained. I have a pause or hesitation before I deliver my cue, but how does my body know how long to hold the cue in this position? That comes down to practice and working at the game. The more practice a player puts in, the more confidence is gained. So the other piece of the puzzle comes down to confidence. If a player has worked hard and has great

mechanics, everything seems like second nature when you watch them play. There is no second-guessing—it is almost like that player is a machine. They know exactly what to do and do not lack the confidence to do it.

One reader sent this to me: I have somewhat of an unorthodox stance, and I also tend to turn my elbow inwards when I stroke. My coach says this is not an issue because I'm comfortable this way. Should this be a big concern for me?

No, it should not. As long as the cue comes through in a straight line, it doesn't matter how you look. The only thing that concerns me is that you say you turn the elbow in when you stroke. Is that during the cue movement? If so, that can cause unwanted spin on the cueball. If the elbow is turned from the beginning in your address position through to the final delivery, it is okay. As far as stance goes, again it doesn't really matter as long as you try to be consistent in everything that you do. If I see the cue coming through in a perfectly straight line yet you are standing unlike anything I have seen, chances are I would show you how the majority do it and explain why, but I wouldn't change you unless you wished to be changed.

Thanks for writing, and good luck! ♦



Her many years of playing snooker in the UK make Allison an expert on stance.

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.