

Ask Allison

by Allison Fisher



Keeping Your Cool

Hi everyone, and thanks for writing with your questions. If you would like me to answer any of your pool-related questions, you can reach me through my website at www.allisonfisher.com. I look forward to hearing from you.

I am having trouble keeping my cool after missed shots. How do you suggest I keep my cool and concentrate on more positive things after a missed shot? What goes through your mind when you miss? What do you say to yourself? It is hard for me to not beat myself up after missed opportunities. Any suggestions?

Frustrating, isn't it? It depends on the day. Sometimes I will say things under my breath that no one should hear. It is a difficult game because unlike other sports we don't just hit back and forth to each other. In our sport we sometimes just have to sit and wait for a new opportunity and it may never come. The worst thing for me as a player is to miss a shot or play poor position and know that particular shot could lose me this match.

It happens to everyone. What you need to do is let a poor shot go straight away. Don't sit and stew on it, because you may very well be back at the table next shot. If you are in a negative frame of mind from that poor shot, how can you approach the table ready to take advantage? The time for analysis is after the match, not while you are involved in it. I sometimes sit in my seat and think about what I am doing and how can I improve. I may also watch my opponent and how they do things. Keep your mind occupied on positive things.

I have been playing with a thinner shaft for the last three years, approximately 11.8 mm. I am about a B+ player and improving. My question is, now that I am improving I am questioning the decision to play with the thin shaft. It feels better to me, but I think I lose some accuracy at times due to deflection. I know that you played snooker with a thinner shaft and wanted your thoughts on this.

When I played snooker I used a 9 1/2 mm tip. When I switched to playing pool, because the balls are bigger I ini-

tially used a 11 3/4 mm tip, but I felt like I didn't have enough control over the cueball. I decided very quickly to switch to a 13 mm tip and noticed a big improvement and much more control over the cueball. Most players use between a 12 and 13 mm tip.

There is a snooker player named John Parrott who is a world champion. I remember while watching him play in an event on TV that I noticed his tip was far larger than the ferrule on his cue. In fact, it overlapped by quite a bit. I think it helped him find the center of the ball a lot easier.

Many people get carried away with sidespin and end up using it on every shot. I have mentioned this before, but it is important to really learn what can be achieved just using the center axis of the cueball. You will be amazed.

As for the shaft, this varies with different manufacturers. There are shafts that have very little deflection and some that have too much. I would pick up a few different ones and get a feel for what you like best. I personally use a Cuetec cue, and I like the feel of the hit, as there is a little give. Also look at the taper of different shafts. Does your shaft get thicker from the tip down the cue? I use a regular taper, but many players play with a pro taper, which stays the same width

from the tip down the shaft for between 12-15 inches. Once you like a cue, stick with it! I meet people who have many cues and wonder why they don't play well. Cues react differently and feel different; therefore, where you aim to make a shot with one may be completely different with another. I used to be an expert at blaming my cue when I wasn't playing well at snooker. My dad would just laugh at me.

What is the best way to clean your cue, and what do you use to do this?

I personally think the best way to clean a cue is with a damp cloth and then go over it with a dry cloth. There are many cue-cleaning products out there that are also very good. I also like to use very fine sandpaper on my cue just to make it really smooth. ♦



No one could be cooler than Allison when she's on the table.