

# Ask Allison

by Allison Fisher

## Make It or Break It

**H**i everyone, and thanks for writing to me with various questions. I will do my best to answer them here and on my website, [www.allisonfisher.com](http://www.allisonfisher.com).

**Do you have any advice for a consistent and effective break shot? Do you use any english, and why do most players break from the side of the table?**

Firstly, the equipment you use is important. What you want to achieve on the break is good stick speed through the cue ball, which will give more energy to the balls. A lighter stick will give faster speed, whereas a heavier stick gives a more solid hit. I like an 18 ounce to break and play with. The tip of the cue should be hard and flat.

Most players break from the side at 9-ball for a couple of reasons. First, there is a higher percentage of making a ball, either a wing ball or the 1 ball. Secondly, the rail is the best bridge you can have because it is solid and not going anywhere. If you are a beginner, I always start by telling someone to just focus on contacting the 1 ball full with the cue ball. It doesn't matter about speed because you will lose accuracy trying to generate it. The cue ball's reaction will tell you what you did right or wrong, so always watch it. Sometimes I recommend putting the 1 ball on the spot and practice hitting it full and stopping or drawing the cue ball back to help with precision. You may want to pick a spot beyond the ball to aim at or look at the cue ball last for accuracy.

There are some fantastic breakers in the game today who not only hit the balls extremely solid but also hold great position with the cue ball, the most explosive being Johnny Archer and Francisco Bustamante. Once you feel

that you can consistently contact the 1 ball full, start adding power. I like to turn my body more side-ways with my weight considerably forward so that my cue stick just wants to propel forward and my hip turns to add power from the body. The most important thing is to follow through with the cue as far as possible, maintaining as much energy on the cue ball as possible. If you watch Johnny Archer in slow motion, the tip of his cue almost reaches the 1 ball before he lifts up.

I don't use sidespin on the cue ball, just center ball or a little draw. However, if I am not successful in making a ball on either side of the table, I may start cutting the 1 ball on the break, in which case I may add a little low right english to bring the cue ball back. One of the most knowledgeable players I have witnessed at breaking is Corey Deuel. He studies the rack and adjusts his speed for the break. It is amazing what you can learn when you start analyzing the balls and their reactions. ♦

*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.*



Francisco Bustamante has one of the most enviable and explosive breaks out there.

