



Ask Allison

by Allison Fisher

On the Level

Thank you for reading my column. I try to answer your questions from my own personal experience, and I hope you enjoy it. You may e-mail questions to www.allisonfisher.com, and they may be chosen for a future article.

Dear Allison, I have two questions:

- 1. Do you have to call a certain pocket when you're on the 9?**
- 2. Why have I seen people pocket the 9 ball intentionally and then spot it back on the table?**

Donnie, in professional tournaments, the answer to the first question is no, you do not have to call the pocket for the 9 ball. However, there are certain invitational events that I have participated in where you do have to call the pocket. One is the Tournament of Champions, where the format is very exciting. It consists of two sets, each a race to 5, and if there is a tie, the match goes into a one-game tiebreaker. In this event, if I pocket the 9 ball but don't call the pocket, the 9 ball gets spotted, and the opponent shoots from where the cue ball lands. I have seen many players in this event not call the 9 ball, and it can be very frustrating for them. That can be the difference between winning and losing a match. In some amateur leagues you do have to call the pocket for the last ball, whether you're playing 8 ball or 9 ball.

After the break shot, if I don't have a good leave on the 1 ball, I can opt to push out, whereby I can still pocket any ball on the table, but I do not continue to shoot. If the 9 ball is hanging over a pocket, I may opt to shoot it in and have it spotted. The 9 is the only ball that gets spotted. My opponent can either take what I leave them or make me shoot again. Generally the push-out is a safety shot; however, sometimes you can push out to a jump shot. If your opponent doesn't like to jump balls, it is an advantage for you. At any time in a game I can pocket the 9 ball directly, but it is a foul, and the 9 ball will be spotted, with my opponent getting ball in hand. The reason I may choose to do this is so that I don't leave my opponent an easy target to win the game. When the 9 ball is hanging over a pocket, anything can happen.

I just have one question for you: I play great sometimes, and other times I don't. I know the problem is being consistent with my stroke and my right hand (I shoot right-handed). I have used the old-style Coke bottle and stroked inside it 100 times. Then I do it with my eyes closed without hitting the edge of the bottle. The hole is the same height as the center of a cue ball. This helps a lot, but when I hit the table it all goes away. I know it's the grip and stroke. Help!

This could be a couple of things. Either you grip the cue too tightly on the follow through, or you do not break your wrist during the stroke, which will give you a seesaw action. If you grip the cue with your whole hand, the cue stick will not stay level. It



A consistent stroke is one of the many attributes that made Allison the number-one player in the

tends to go up and down. Of course, many shots played in pool require more than just center-ball hit. When you are cueing across a rail, it is impossible to keep the cue perfectly level; therefore, on the follow-through the tip will head down towards the cloth if playing with stun or draw. If you are using the Coke bottle on the kitchen table, for example, it is easy to have a level stroke, but when rails are inhibiting the cue from being perfectly level, it is impossible. I would not worry so much about being perfectly level. You should try to be as level as possible with the circumstances. The most important thing is to accelerate through the cue ball and

follow through beyond the ball like a mirror image of your back swing. Good luck! ♦

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.