

Nic Barrow discusses Aiming Issues with client Daniel D'Souza.

From our first call, there were practices I asked you to do.

The practices are:

1. Play straight blacks, pinks and blues as normal.
But get down to straight ones and the FIRST position you get down to the shot, STOP and then SLOWLY pull the cue back and drop the ball in.
This will prove you are aiming correctly and immediately. THEN any additional comfort you get from cueing is a bonus.
2. Then practice a few straight shots with more cueings than you normally would. This will give you a flavour of cueing up differing amounts of time.
3. Then practice until you pot five straight ones SLOWLY!
Then move the cue ball half a balls width and repeat.
Then move another half a balls width and repeat.
Keep going until you cannot pot five balls easily. Stop and come back to the exercise tomorrow and start from the beginning.
4. Screw shots: Practice small screw shots – only six inches exactly. Repeat five times. Then screw back 10 inches exactly five times etc etc.

In our second call, we discussed the above practices and what you had learnt from them and from our first call. We also discussed the subject of variables...

Variables when missing a pot.

It is extremely important that, now you understand how to aim the balls like the players on TV, you are able to diagnose what went wrong when you don't pot the ball you aim for.

The variables you need to be able to diagnose after every shot are:

1. Did I play the shot with side spin?
2. Did I play the shot with wrong aiming?
3. Did I play the shot with wrong cueing?

To eliminate variable number 1:

Play the 'Push Practice'. This is where you place just the cue ball on the table, get down to the shot and make the tip of the cue TOUCH the cue ball. WITHOUT pulling back the cue even 1mm, simply PUSH the cue forward. If you hear any contact sound at all it does not count as it means there was a gap between the tip and the cue ball. Play it again in that case.

When the cue ball has been truly pushed is where you will see if you were aiming in the centre of the cue ball or not. Even slightly off centre striking in this situation will result in a big, exaggerated push to the opposite side of the pocket to the sidespin applied.

Keep playing until you can push the cue ball into the pocket from 6 or 7 feet. Then increase the distance to the pocket and repeat.

To eliminate variable number 3:

Play the shots at pocket speed. This way, power will have no adverse effect to the accuracy of the cue ball.

With these two variables eliminated, you will then be free to get good solid feedback on how good your aiming is and how the exercises from week one are in fact helping your game to improve now.

Practice for week 2:

Simply play pinks of the spot into the corner pocket from 30cm and see if you can make 8+ out of ten attempts.

When you have done this, increase the distance to 35 or 40cm and repeat.

We also discussed variables in screw shots:

After every shot you should be able to diagnose whether you failed to achieve your screw shot due to one or more of the following.

Remember, you could be making one or more of these errors and it is up to you to diagnose which one(s) you made if the screw shot is not as planned.

Only then will you be able to get accurate feedback on your screw shots, and be able to keep on a continual upwards learning curve on your screw shots:

1. Did I aim at the wrong height of the cue ball for an effective screw shot?
2. Did I strike the cue ball in a different height to that which I was aiming?
3. Did I *plan* too much or too little power to get the exact distance of screw shot I planned?
4. Did I *play* a different power to that which I had *planned*?

I hope all well goes for you over the next few weeks and into the future.

Sincerely,

Nic Barrow.