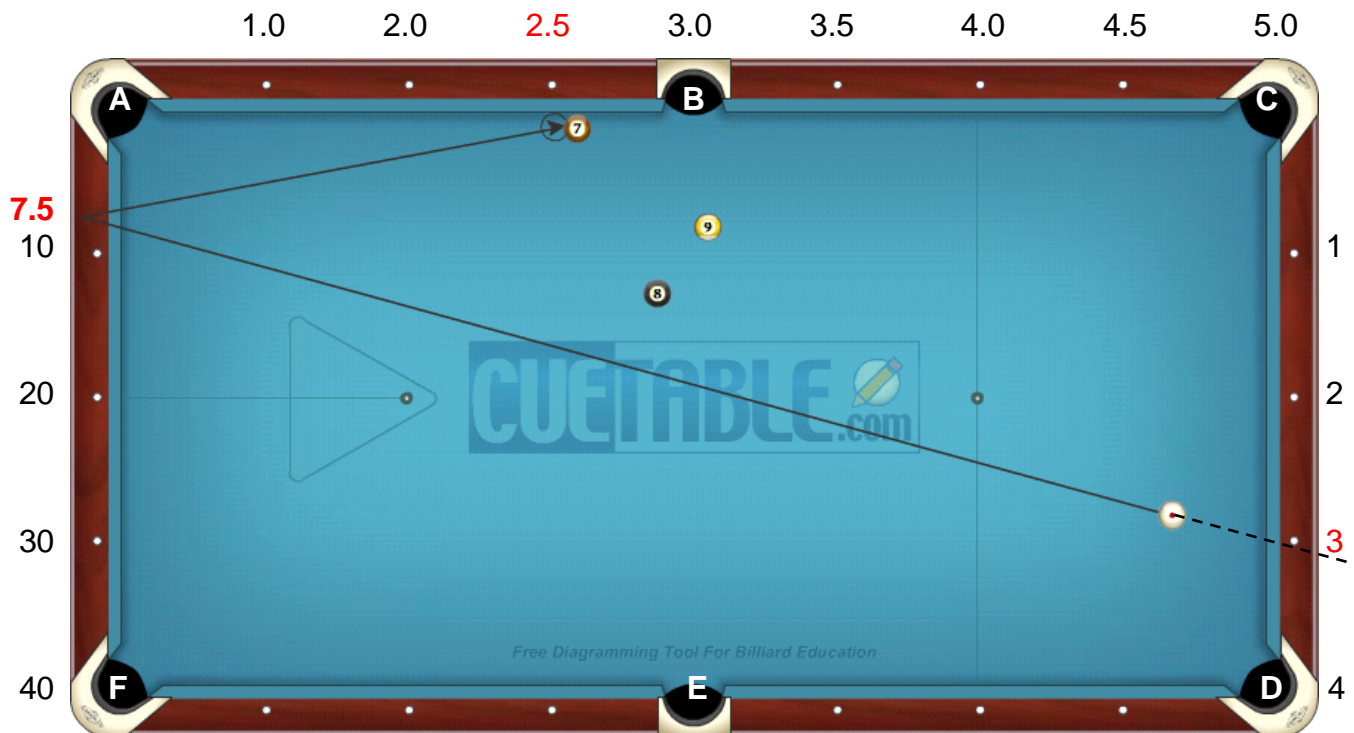


System Sid – Part 1

The system I want to discuss for this article is usually referred to as System Sid. I learned this from a few billiard players, and also have seen it referred to in various publications. I believe it's named after 3-cushion billiard player Sid Banner, although I'm not sure if he invented it or is credited with passing the information along. This system is a dead ball system, meaning the cue ball is hit with a rolling cue ball (1/2 tip – 1 tip above center) and no english, and it is very useful for 1 rail, end rail first kicks.

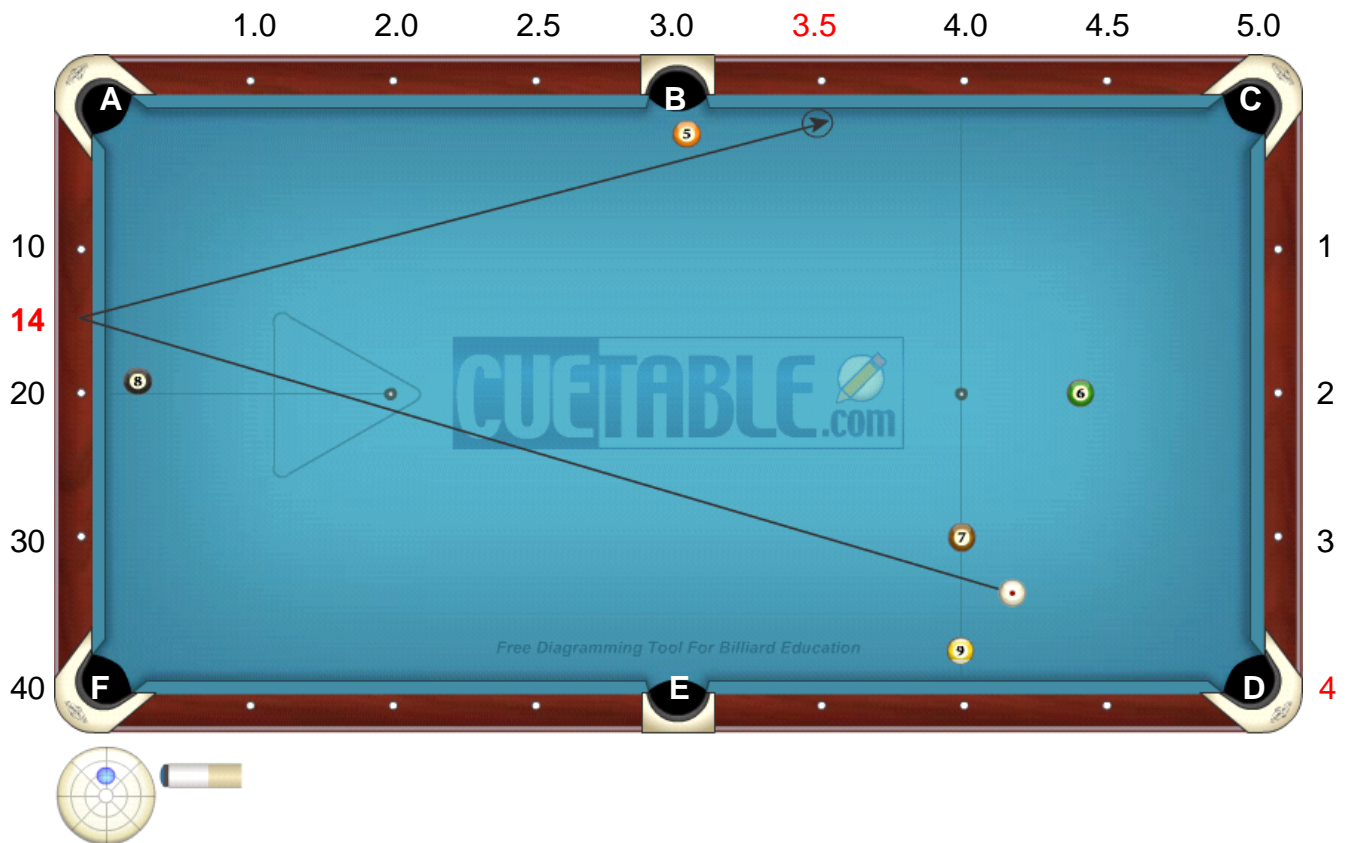


The game is 9 ball, and you are left with this shot. Your first priority is to hit the ball, but ideally it would be nice to play safe as well. First, look at the point on the long rail that you want to hit. You'll see the diamonds are numbered starting at 1, then 2, and then they increase by $\frac{1}{2}$ for each diamond further up the table. It's important for this system that the hit point on the long rail is adjacent to the number on the rail, NOT through the diamond as is the case for a lot of systems. So here, we want the cue ball to make contact with the rail adjacent to point 2.5. If we do so, the cue ball will hit the 7 sending it up table and hopefully hiding the cue ball behind the 8 and 9.

Next we determine the cue ball's starting point. Since we are closest to the diamond 3 diamonds from the corner (numbered "3" above in red) we use that. Multiplying the starting number (3) by the ending number (2.5) we get 7.5, which is our estimated aim point on the bottom (left) end rail. As you can see, the aim points on the bottom end rail are numbered from the corner by 10's, so 7.5 would be a quarter diamond above diamond 1 (number 10 for this system). Aim through the calculated end rail point, use no english and $\frac{1}{2}$ - 1 tip above center to get the ball rolling smoothly and use a lag-type speed, just hard enough to send the cue ball up and down the table once.

As you can see, this simple system offers a lot of possibilities. If the cue ball is coming out of the bottom right corner (corner "D"), multiply 4 by 2.5 and you get 10, so aiming right through the first diamond on the bottom rail will hit your mark. As another example, starting from that same bottom right corner ("D") and trying to kick to the top right corner ("C"), the system validates what most people know, hitting half way in between on the bottom rail ($4 \times 5 = 20$) will send the cue ball to its target. Experiment with different origin and ending points to get comfortable with the system and make any adjustments needed.

It's important to remember to estimate your target point correctly, adjacent to the rail and not through the diamond, as shown in the example below:



We are left with this position and would like to kick the 5 ball in softly and land perfectly on the 6. The 7 may be too close to jump (for some at least), the 9 ball is in the way of the cross-side kick, and trying to masse around the 7 is difficult. So why not use System Sid? We select our target point on the top rail as 3.5. Note that it is NOT 3.0, even though the 5 ball is adjacent to 3.0. We actually need the cue ball to travel along a line that would have it end up adjacent to point 3.5 on the rail, allowing it to brush the 5 ball into the pocket on its way.

Looking at the shot, our cue ball origin point is out of the corner, or 4, so multiplying 4 times our target point of 3.5 gives us an aim point of 14 on the end rail ($4 \times 3.5 = 14$). We aim through 14, just a little above the half way point between the first and second diamonds on the end rail, brush the 5 into the side pocket and continue our run. I actually made a shot very similar to this in a tournament a few weeks ago, although in my case the 6 ball was not in such a favorable position. I had confidence in my knowledge of this system and knew that even if I didn't make the ball I would come very, very close.

One last thing – this system is designed for a rolling cue ball and using a lag speed. If you find you have a similar shot that fits the system but you need to hit it harder, try adjusting about 10 – 20 percent depending on how hard you are hitting. In the above example, if I wanted to hit this at firm speed I would try aiming around 11 (20 percent of 14 is 2.8, I round up to 3 and subtract 3 from 14 to get 11). This is where the experimentation and feel comes in with this and other systems. Also remember that when hitting the cue ball harder it's more difficult to hit accurately, so be sure to not put any unintended english on the ball and focus on a pure slightly above center hit.

That's it for this article. In the next article I'll go over a few extensions to this system that may not be obvious but are equally as useful. Until then, happy kicking!