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# The Right Time To Masse

Knowing when to hit the fancy shot is as important as executing it.

The last two columns covered theory, technique and equipment involved with masse shots. Now it's time to consider when to use your new skills.

In Diagrams 1 and 2, the game is 9-ball. In Diagram 1, you are slightly hooked on the 1 ball and the choice is between the masse shot and the kick shot. The masse is just like one you've been practicing, and the kick off the far side rail is quite likely to either scratch or sell out, so the masse is better. In the position shown, the 2 ball is ready for the run in case you do make the 1, which increases the payback for a good shot. If the 1 ball happens to be on the other side of the pocket, the kick is the better shot. If the cue ball is farther behind the blocking ball, you have to decide how confident you are in the curve shot.

In Diagram 2, there isn't even a good safety; a thin hit on the left side of the 1 is a likely scratch at A. There are two masse shots, though. A simple safety can be played by hitting about half-ball on the 1 ball with the stick pointed at about D. Use mostly right side, and enough elevation to hit the side rail at B with enough speed to continue to the end rail and then C.

The second shot is also likely to end in a safe, but has a chance to win. Play about the same angle and elevation with the cue stick, but use left-side spin and maybe a little draw with the intent to curve the cue ball back just enough to pocket the 9. The 1 ball must be struck full enough to drive it back across the table, so that it will be hidden by the 7-8 if the cue ball ends close to the 9. Adjust the separation between the cue ball and the 1 to see how that affects the shot.

There are some fun shots in Diagram 3. In shot A, the cue ball starts near the rail on the headstring. It must go around the ball on the spot to pocket the combination in the corner. The object of the B shot in Diagram 3 is to pocket both balls. The surprising part is that the far ball is pocketed first. Use a nearly vertical stick with left draw. If you cannot get good action at that distance, move the cue ball a little closer. The cue ball needs to start just a little off the rail so that it doesn't jump up under the nose of the rail and scoot out. Remember: both of these fancy shots are much easier if the cue ball or cloth is slippery.

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