

Bob Jewett



# Jumping As It Should Be

Take the leap to a higher level.

In the October 2000 issue of *BD*, I pointed out some uses of jump shots in play. Pool books, such as "Byrne's Advanced Technique," also show examples, and recommend techniques for getting more height. Below are several practice drills that will let you prepare for your next journey into the third dimension.

I hope all readers know by now that it is illegal, immoral, and unpatriotic to jump by scooping under the cue ball to get a miscue. Jumping is only legal if done by driving the cue ball into the cloth with an elevated stick, and the obstacle is cleared on the rebound.

First, a word about the cloth. A small scrap of pool cloth can be placed under the cue ball to reduce the chance of tears and those ugly white spots that a jumping cue ball leaves, but you can't fully learn the reaction of the cue ball off the cloth with that protection. And if you're going to shoot more than a couple of shots, you better have the approval of the person who owns the cloth. A good strategy is to find out when the cloth is about to be changed, and practice just before. Another aspect of cloth is that some styles are really hard to jump on — maybe the table bed contributes to this.

In **Diagram 1** you'll see a standard trick shot with the two object balls exactly a ball apart. Two other balls (those on the outside) have been placed on paper reinforcing donuts to allow quick repositioning of the object balls if you hit them. The goal of the shot is to pocket the ball by the side pocket without touching the two interferers. Let's

set the additional goal that the cue ball must not hit the side cushion. This shot is about as easy as jump shots get. If you make it, move the obstacle balls slightly closer together. The two outside balls — the ones on the paper reinforcers — allow you to see easily how much you have moved the inner balls together. Try a quarter inch (6 mil-

imeters) or so closer. Each time you make the shot, narrow the gap, but if you miss, make the next shot easier. After a dozen shots or so, you should reach the limit of your current ability. Did you remember to make the shot easier or harder after each attempt?

limeters) or so closer. Each time you make the shot, narrow the gap, but if you miss, make the next shot easier. After a dozen shots or so, you should reach the limit of your current ability. Did you remember to make the shot easier or harder after each attempt?

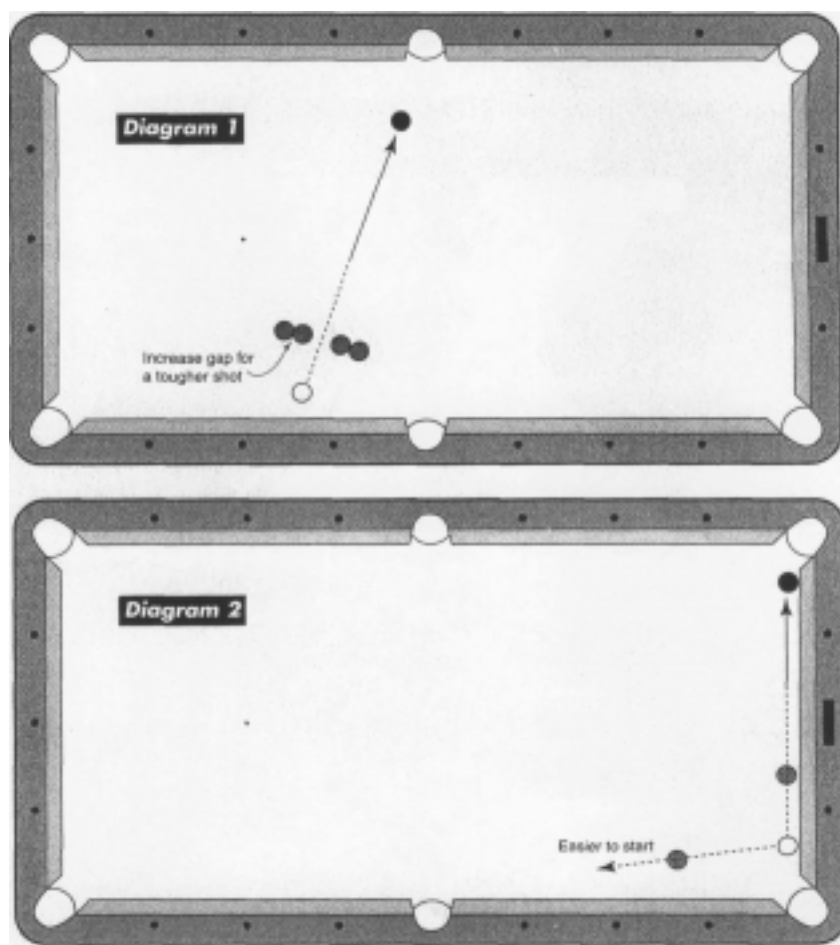
For variations, see how softly you can shoot and still get the jump. Then, see if

you can draw the cue ball back to the rail you are bridging from. Then, move the cue ball and blockers out onto the table some more, so you have to bridge on the table rather than on the cushion. Then, try different separations between the cue ball and the blockers. After a little practice, you will come to the conclusion that with a normal cue stick, you (and your particular technique) can clear x% of a ball that is y inches away for a given speed of stroke. After that limit you have two choices: get one of these new-fangled jump sticks, or shoot something else like a kick or masse. If you do get a jump stick, remember that you will retain more aiming accuracy with your normal stick, but you can get more height with the short, light, hard-tipped jumper. In either case, you need to find your limits and the drills above will help.

In **Diagram 2** is a drill that probably requires a jump stick. The idea is to get over a whole ball. Begin with the blocker at your best distance from the cue ball. For me, that's about one diamond. To find our own best distance, enlist a

friend to watch on a few shots without a blocker — just try to get good height on the cue ball. Your friend needs to note where the cue ball came back to the cloth. You may be able to see the landing spot yourself, as the cue ball's return will leave white marks on some cloth.

After you have some success at your best distance, try moving the object ball closer



## Bob Jewett

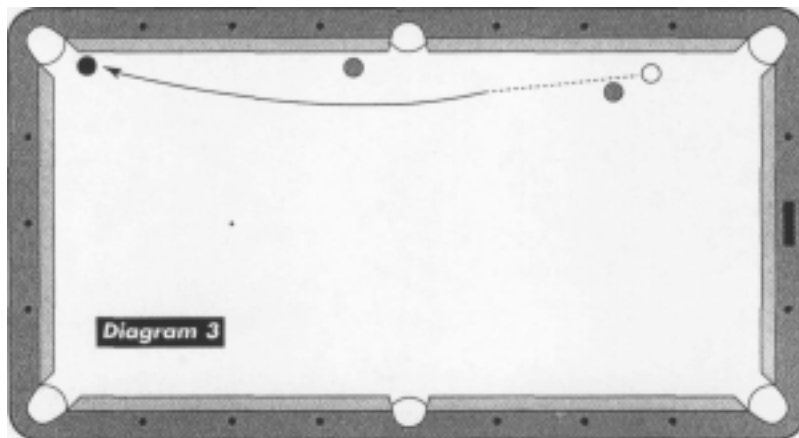
gradually. Some suggestions: dart grip; release the stick on contact; throw the stick at the ball; play lower on the cue ball, but not so low that you miscue; get a harder tip. Work that blocker towards you until you find your absolute closeness limit.

Next, try the same shot, but move the blocker farther away. I think you'll find that this direction is much tougher to deal with. The cue ball needs to be in the air for a longer distance, and on the second bounce (the bounce after the landing bounce) it is likely to hit the object ball high and proceed off the table.

You may want to try this shot in the long direction of the table to allow the cue ball to settle down before it gets to the object ball.

This drill suggests something about how to play safe. If you leave the cue ball within an inch of the blocker, a good hit is unlikely. On the other hand, if the blocker is a couple of diamonds away from the cue ball, the speed required for a good hit is

likely to cause a trip to the carpet. There is one way to keep the cue ball from jumping on such a shot, and that's to hit the object ball just as the cue ball is landing. As long



as the cue ball contacts the object ball near the equator, any forward jump is much reduced. However you're going to play safe, try to avoid the middle distance — about a diamond — that is most comfortable for jumping.

Can you play jump shots with follow? The high cue tip will tend to trap the cue ball on the cloth, but try it to find your own

limit. Begin with the easiest shot possible, as in Diagram 1. Can you follow forward and back across the table? What if the blockers are tighter and you have to elevate more — is follow still possible?

While we're spinning the cue ball, let's try yet another dimension — jump masse. **Diagram 3** shows a good place to leave your opponent. Clearing the first ball is not hard, but going straight over that second one is a real challenge. The recommended option is to jump the first ball and curve around the second. In this case, right English is needed, and draw may help as well.

Start with the second blocker barely in the way, and move it farther from the cushion as you get the knack.

Jumping is fun, and nothing electrifies a crowd more than when a champion executes a full jump to make the object ball from a stone-cold safe, but always remember that other ways may be better, and you need to have them ready as well.