

Draw Like Crazy

by Tom Simpson © November 2003

One of my favorite pool expressions is "Draw for show, follow for dough." This is good advice. Follow is easy to control. Draw is definitely not. Follow is easy to execute. Draw is difficult. Follow works well. But draw is way sexier.

Call it what you like – draw, backspin, suck-back, screw – everyone wants to be able to shoot big draw shots. It's thrilling, gratifying, and just plain necessary. So let's talk about how to get more – and more consistent – draw.

There are **two physical factors** that determine how much draw you get on any shot:

1. How low did you strike the cueball?
2. How hard did you hit it?

Both matter. You can accomplish the same result with many different combinations of low and hard. For example, if you want to hit a stop shot at the far end of the table, you can hit very hard and just below center. The cueball won't have time to start rolling. Or, you could hit maximum low and much softer (a "drag shot"). The slower speed allows the cloth friction to wear the backspin off the ball along the way. There are many combinations of "how low" and "how hard" between these two extremes that can produce the same result. So what should you do? Shoot the combination that maximizes your likelihood of success, given your current ability, the quality of the equipment, and the pressures of the game.

What produces big-time draw? **Hit maximum low and maximum speed to get maximum draw.** Sounds good, but of course, that's not easy. When you try to hit low, you may miscue. When you try to hit hard, your fundamentals break down, and you may not hit the cueball exactly where you intended.

Experience has shown me the main reason players don't get as much draw as they'd like is they are simply not hitting the ball low enough. I'd keep saying "Hey, hit it lower," but they'd keep getting the same, poor draw result. I finally figured it out. Ready to get more draw? Try this. **Start with your tip on the cloth** at the base of the cueball. Yes, that's *on* the cloth. Raise the tip a hair. Shoot and see what happens. Did you miscue? If not, you didn't hit as low as you aimed. If you did miscue, great. Now raise your tip *two* hairs and shoot again. Repeat until you get a good feel for how low really is. **We think with the middle of our tip, but we hit draw shots with the top edge of the tip.** Especially if you have a thick shaft (13mm or more), it's difficult to get super low without hitting the cloth on the way to the cueball.

This brings up the next draw complication. To accurately deliver your tip to that very low contact point on the cueball takes good fundamentals. Down there near the miscue point and near the cloth, if you're off you're in trouble. And on top of that, if you're also trying to hit hard, it's even more difficult to be accurate. You can't get away with weak fundamentals when you're shooting draw shots – you have to consistently hit where you're aiming. Extreme shots are not very forgiving.

Again, how low and how hard are the main factors. Also important are follow through and determination. Following through will help you have better accuracy and more of a stroke than a poke. Good follow through improves consistency. Determination will help you strike that cueball low and hard, even though your brain may be telling you you're about to miscue or hit the cloth. Determination can also help you follow through into the table. It's perfectly OK to hit the cloth *after* you hit the cueball. Don't be afraid – you're *supposed* to do it this way.

There is a myth among players that the easiest way to get draw is to elevate the butt of your cue and hit below center ball. Not true. To get draw, you have to break the friction between the ball & cloth. When you hit down on the ball, you're actually putting more downward pressure on the cueball, so there is *more* friction with the cloth. And of course, the elevated cue introduces additional accuracy problems. Yes, there are times when an elevated draw shot is appropriate, such as the "nip draw" to avoid a double hit when the balls are close together. But for maximizing draw effect, **get low, get flat, get power, and hit through the bottom of the cueball with authority.**