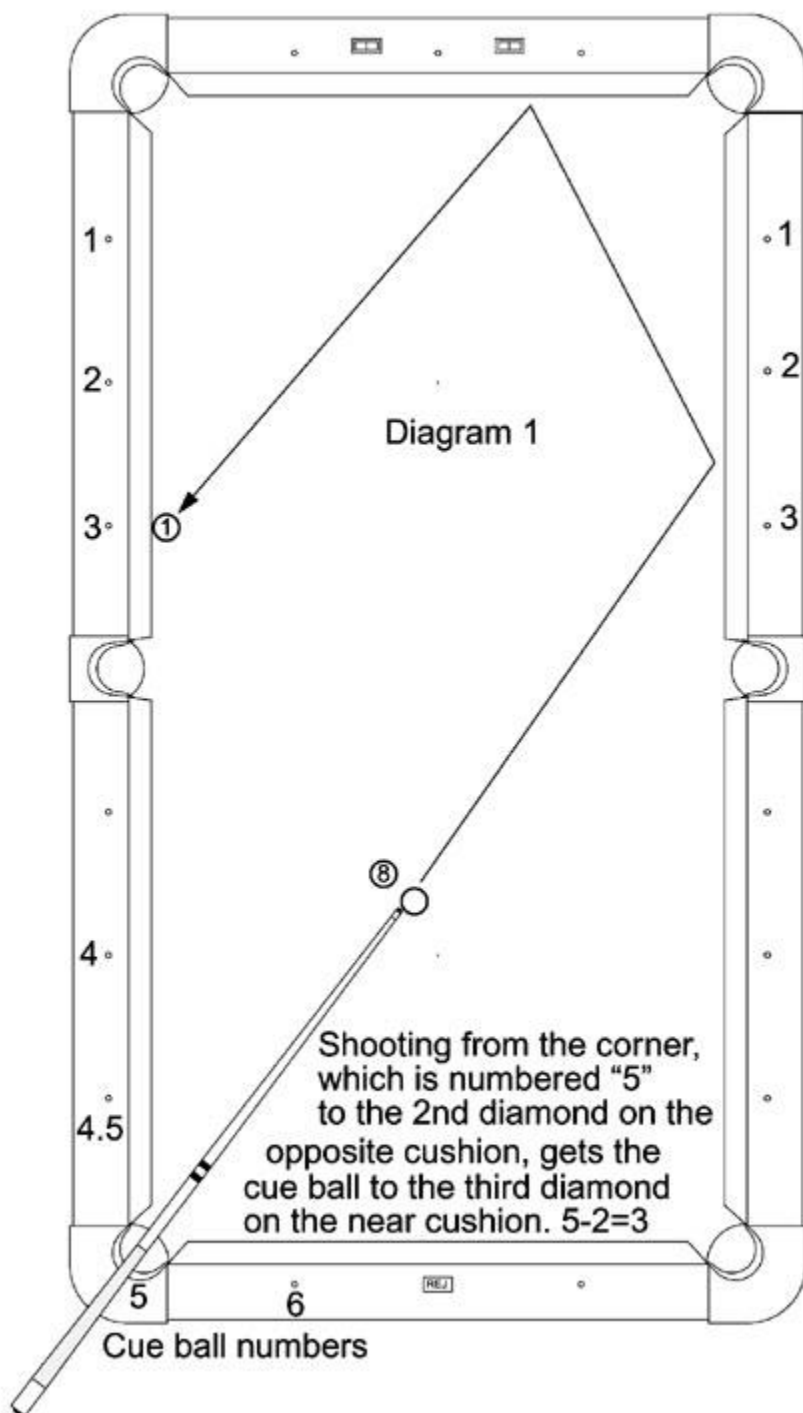


# DIAMOND SYSTEM DETAILS

(November Issue 2005)



In last month's column, I described the basics of the "Corner-5" diamond system. Sometimes it's just called the diamond system, although there are lots of diamond systems. An example shot is to shoot from a foot pocket to the opposite "headstring diamond" which on the long cushion and two diamonds from the pocket as shown in Diagram 1. The cue ball should hit the side cushion, the head cushion and then the other side cushion at about the third diamond from the head pocket. The corresponding numbers are five for the cue ball (starting in the corner), two for the first cushion, and three for the third cushion.

Remember that you need to use running follow with this system.

If you don't remember the numbering system from last month, you can always go to the On The Break News website and pull it up, along with lots of other vintage articles.

A major problem for all diamond system play is to be consistent in what you mean by shooting to a diamond.

There are two possibilities. First, you could send the cue ball towards the round spot on the rail -- the diamond itself. This is the obvious point. The other is to send the cue ball to the spot on the

cushion that is opposite the diamond. These are shown in Diagram 2. They are called shooting "through" and shooting "opposite" the diamond, as shown.

Why would anyone want to use the second method, shooting opposite? The main reason is that you will always hit the same place on the cushion no matter where the cue ball starts. Notice how far from the diamond the cue ball hits when shooting "through" the diamond. Raymond Ceulemans, the many-time world champion at carom billiards recommends the "opposite" method.

If you do use the opposite method, planning the next rail is somewhat easier. You know that the cue ball will start even with the diamond as it moves to the next cushion. For the "through" case, you have to figure out where the cue ball will hit the nose of the cushion, which is  $\frac{2}{3}$  of a diamond down the table.

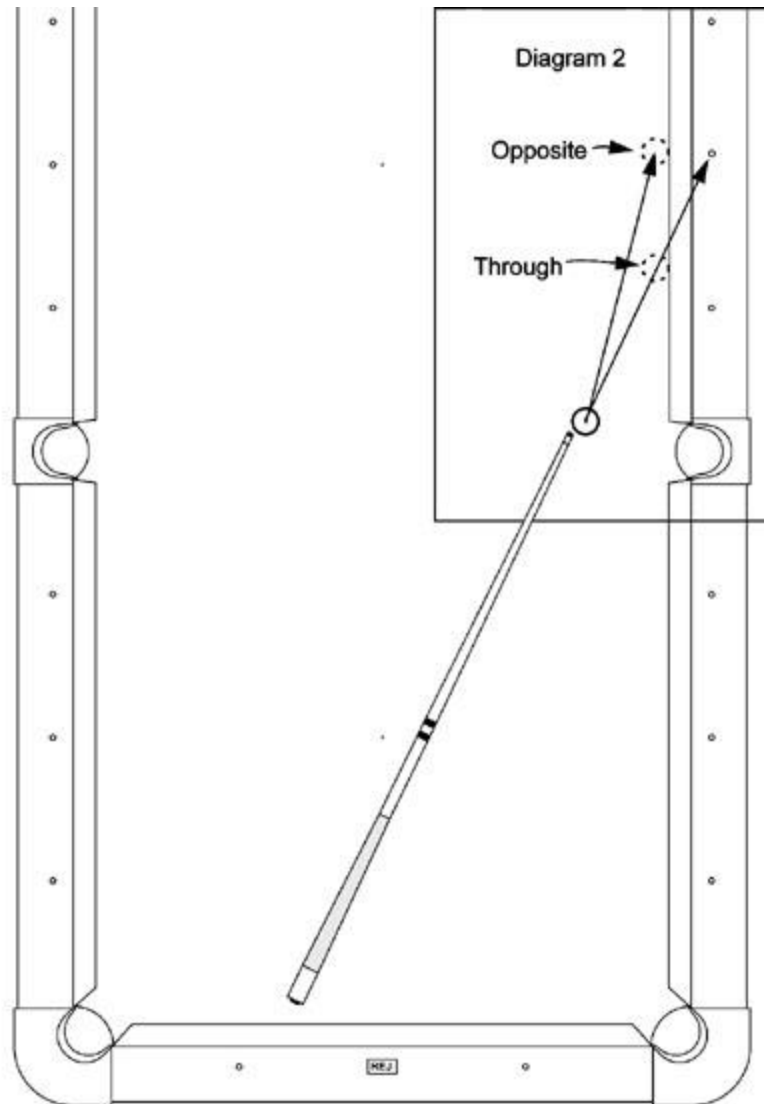
The choice between these two ways of thinking about the spot on the rail must also be considered when planning where the cue ball will hit other cushions. Last month I glossed over this point, but if you want accuracy in your hits you need to worry about it. In Diagram 1, the ball you need to hit is sitting exactly on a diamond, so I would want the cue ball to hit opposite that diamond -- exactly where the ball is. In Diagram 2, you can see that if I send the cue ball towards a diamond ("through" it) from the angle shown, there is no hope of hitting the ball "opposite" the diamond.

There is no law that says the two rail contacts need to be measured in the same way. You could work on your system using "through" for the first contact because that's an easier way to aim, and "opposite" for the third rail contact because that's easier to use to hit balls. This is what is illustrated in Diagram 1 and what I'll assume in the discussion below. Whatever you chose to do, you need to practice with it and determine what sort of corrections are needed to make the system accurate. You will probably find that your table does not quite follow the system.

And accuracy is a real problem. Usually the ball you need to hit after two or three rails is at least two balls wide - - you can hit it thin on either side and still have a good hit. Even easier is when the ball is sitting a couple of inches off a cushion so you can either hit the ball directly or after the cushion. Then the ball may be

a target more than six inches wide. Since this is about half the distance between diamonds, in the best case, you can be off in your calculation by half a diamond. There are lots of situations in which you have to be much more accurate to have a good result. You may need to hit the object ball on the correct side, for example. In this case the target is only an inch wide after two or three cushions and you have to have done both your calculations and execution with an accuracy of 1/12th of a diamond.

So, now it's time for practice. Start with the shot shown in Diagram 1. Note that you can begin the cue ball anywhere along the line from the corner pocket to the second diamond, just as long as the butt of your cue passes over the pocket when you shoot. First, find where this shot naturally goes on the third cushion by moving the object ball until you hit it full. Hint: this will almost certainly not be at the position shown in the diagram. You should be able to hit it fairly full four out of five tries if you have the ball set correctly.



If the "landing" number is not 3 on the third cushion, then you have to note the correction, such as -0.4 diamonds. Next try from the corner to diamond 1 on the first rail. The cue ball should go to 4 (5-1) but does it? Is the shot fixed by adding in the correction you needed for the first shot? Did you remember to use running (left in this case) follow on the shot to make it more consistent?

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