

Nr. 66 Psychologie – Anhang 2 : Nick Prinsloo über Stoß und Zielen

<http://www.azbilliards.com/nick/weekly/aa030401a.htm>

Im folgenden geht es um das Zielen und die Stoßausführung bei langen Distanzen, wie es ja beim Pool-Billard als Einstieg in die Serie fast die Regel ist.

Pausing For Perfection

We're almost ready to bring the cue through for that final delivery: the stroke itself. We could, at the end of the last practice stroke (when the tip of the cue is almost against the cue ball), let the cue continue its forward motion and actually play through the cue ball, thereby finishing the stroke.

Chances are, if you have done everything correctly up to now, and provided the shot is not one that makes professionals think twice, you will pocket the ball. Now ask yourself the following questions: will I make the ball ten times out of ten? Will I make the ball if getting on the next one requires some kind of fancy positional maneuver? Will I then make it ten times out of ten? Will I make that ball if it is the winning ball of an important game? Of an important match? Of the finals of an important tournament? Against Efren Reyes in the finals of an important tournament, broadcast live on television with camaramen moving around you and bright lights in our eyes?

If you are serious about pool and improving your game, and you answered NO to any of the previous questions, then simply letting go at the end of the final practice stroke is not good enough. You need an important additional element or two. Something that will help you focus enough without breaking your rhythm to never miss that shot, regardless of the circumstances and playing conditions.

I have found that element (one of them, at least) to be a **slight pause before you draw the cue back** for the final delivery. A pause just long enough for your eyes to fix themselves on the object ball, where they will stay throughout the completion of the stroke. You will be amazed at the power of this little technique. Every time I slip out of form and find I am missing balls I should normally make, it is because I forget to pause, or get lazy and rush the stroke.

This pause (pause #1) should be no more than a second long, at most 1.5 seconds. Anything longer than that will make your eyes want to wander back to the cue ball. Similarly, it should not be too short, although for quick players it will be no more than a slight pause. As long as it gives your eyes the chance to go to the object ball and stay there long enough to verify that you are still in line and aiming right.

Then, when you are ready, draw the cue back, fairly slowly (not painfully slowly, just smoothly). Once again, this will vary from player to player, depending on how quick you are. The backswing affects the cue delivery to an extent players hardly ever consider. It should be concentrated upon to keep the backswing as straight as possible. If the cue has ended off line at the back of the backswing, it will not come through in a straight line. Slow, smooth and straight are the keywords concerning the backswing.

The second pause takes place now, at the end of the backswing, just before the forward stroke. It is not quite a stopping action, or as long a pause as the first one when your tip is addressing the cue ball, but merely a slight, split-second pause between the backward and forward motion of the cue. In fact, make sure you don't stop the flow of the cue; it will make the action too mechanical and forced.

The backswing-pause-forward-stroke action can be likened to taking a deep breath and exhaling; taking the breath is quite slow and there is a definite pause before you exhale. Try breathing in quickly and exhaling without the "pause". Feels unnatural, doesn't it? Another analogy is that of driving a car in reverse, and then changing into a forward gear. You wouldn't suddenly jam the car into Drive while it is still moving backwards, would you? It is a **smooth** change of direction.

Here is a breakdown of a typical stroke, from start to finish:

STROKE, STROKE, STROKE, STROKE, *PAUSE*
(Eyes to object ball)....., BACKSWING,
SHORT PAUSE, SHOOT !

This facet of the technique, when mastered, could separate you from your peers in no time. Make it a fundamental part of your technique by practicing it until it becomes natural. You should use a practice routine consisting of easy shots - preferably straight ones over a short distance, and just practice getting the timing right, without having to worry too much about getting the angle right. That way you can focus entirely on the pause-backswing-pause-shoot tech-nique, get that right - only then move on to more demanding shots.