

TABL GATHERZ

Tablz hav some relyable and uzer-friendly gather-shots that ken help u to get out of a sticky pozzzy.

TABL - GATHER 1

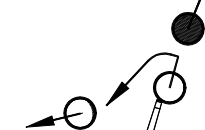
Here'z a good one to start with. The qball and red are almost in line with the left-baulk-pocket, and they are halfway between the spot and the right-top-pocket. We screw onto the yellow, the red just missing the baulk-pocket. The red kumz back for a nice gather, az shown.

- U will be surprized at how hard u havta hit the red to get it to kum all the way back. And u will see that it iz difficult to play a screw shot this close to the cushion.
- If ya try to uze lots of screw u will over-screw, and the red will stop short. U havta learn to do a forceful sort of stun-screw.
- And u havta hav very littl follow-throo, else u will foul the qball.
- U will find it difficult to guide the red accurately. A littl left-hand-side will help that. If the cannon on yellow iz the worry, then some right-hand-side might be better.

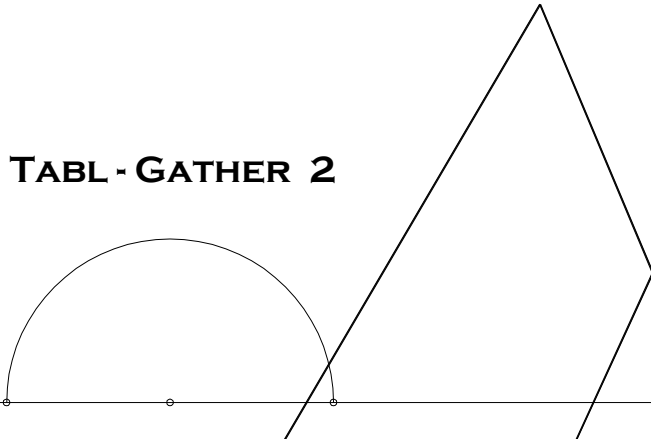
If u get some confidence with this Tabl-Gather shot (and otherz), uken set it (them) up on purpose when thingz start to go awry.

If the red stops short, on the side cushion, perhaps uken play a turn-gather.

Or, look for an in-off, & play this to leev a gather from in-hand (not shown). If this leedz to good pozzzy, good, if not, play another in-off to leev a gather from in-hand.

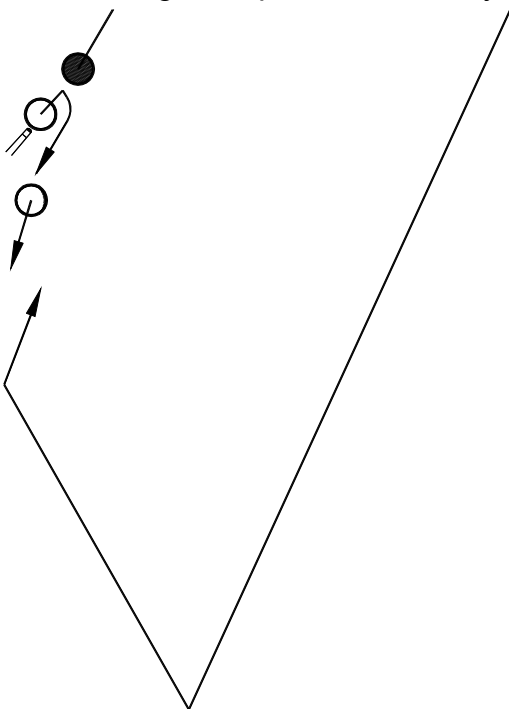


TABL - GATHER 2



Here the qball and red are almost in line with the left-baulk-pocket, and they are near the midpoint of the side-cushion. We screw onto the yellow, the red just missing the baulk-pocket. The red kumz back for a nice gather, az shown.

RAINBOWZ With very forceful screwz, especially on newish slippery cloths, the natural tendency iz to get a rainbow. The qball describez a large circle, & goze around the yellow, missing by a mile. U need to do 2 thingz. Firstly, aim thicker on the red, to reduce the size of the rainbow. Imagining that the yellow iz a half-ball or a full-ball further left iz perhaps the best way of doing this. Secondly, the natural tendency iz to make a very large backswing, to get more power. But, for most playerz, the bigger the backswing the less accurate the contact on the qball. U might get a sickly looking stun-shot instead of that magnificent screw. The trick iz to uze the shortest backswing that u ken. In any case, make sure that u pauze at the end of the backswing. Keep still. Don't lift yor fat head. Chalk-up.



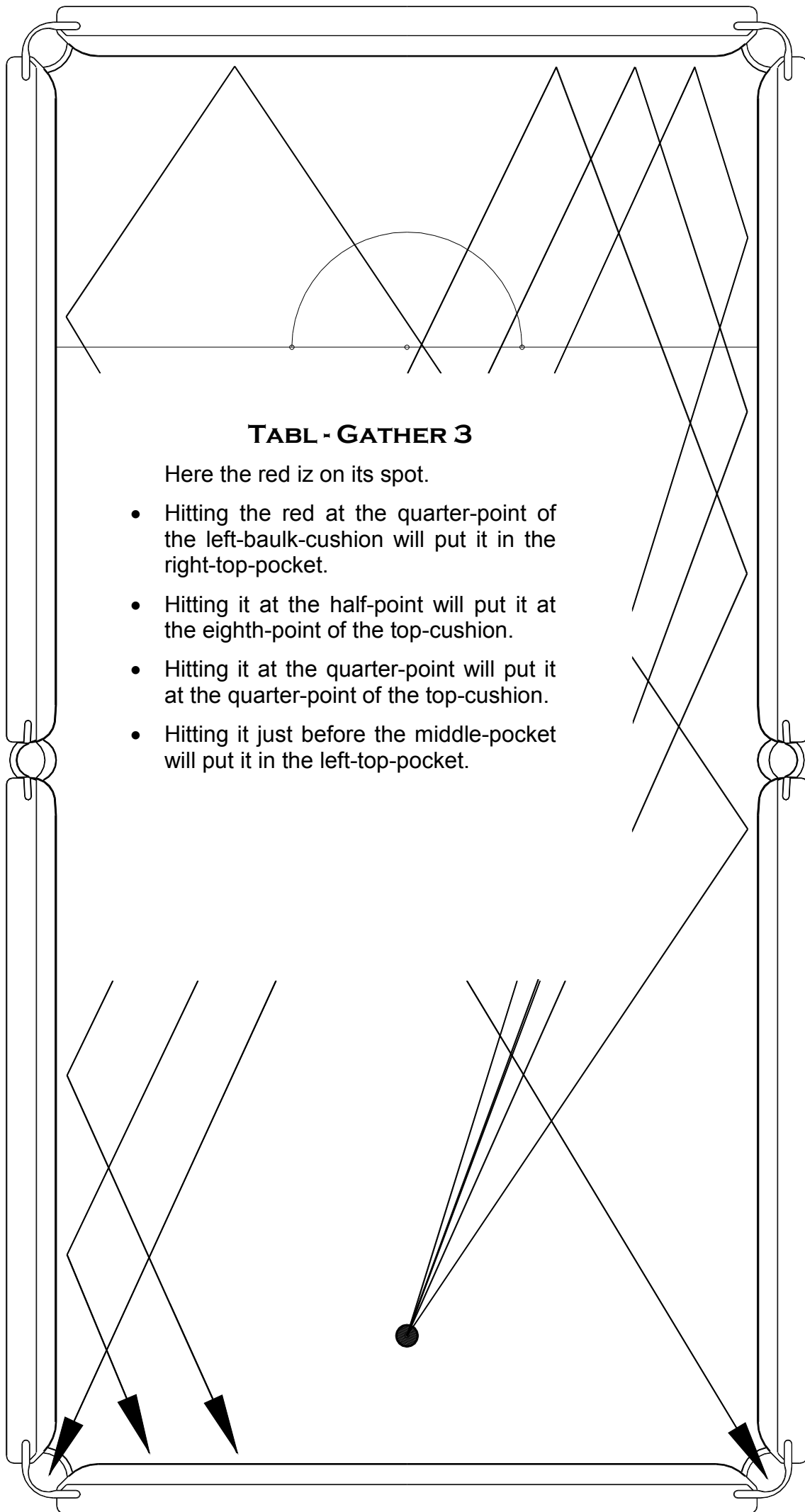


TABLE - GATHER 3

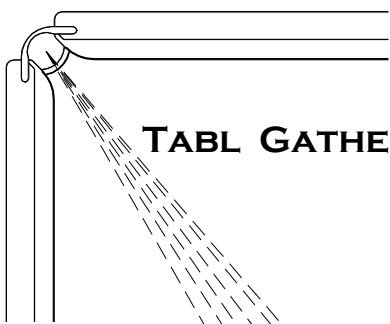
Here the red is on its spot.

- Hitting the red at the quarter-point of the left-baulk-cushion will put it in the right-top-pocket.
- Hitting it at the half-point will put it at the eighth-point of the top-cushion.
- Hitting it at the quarter-point will put it at the quarter-point of the top-cushion.
- Hitting it just before the middle-pocket will put it in the left-top-pocket.

1/4

HALF

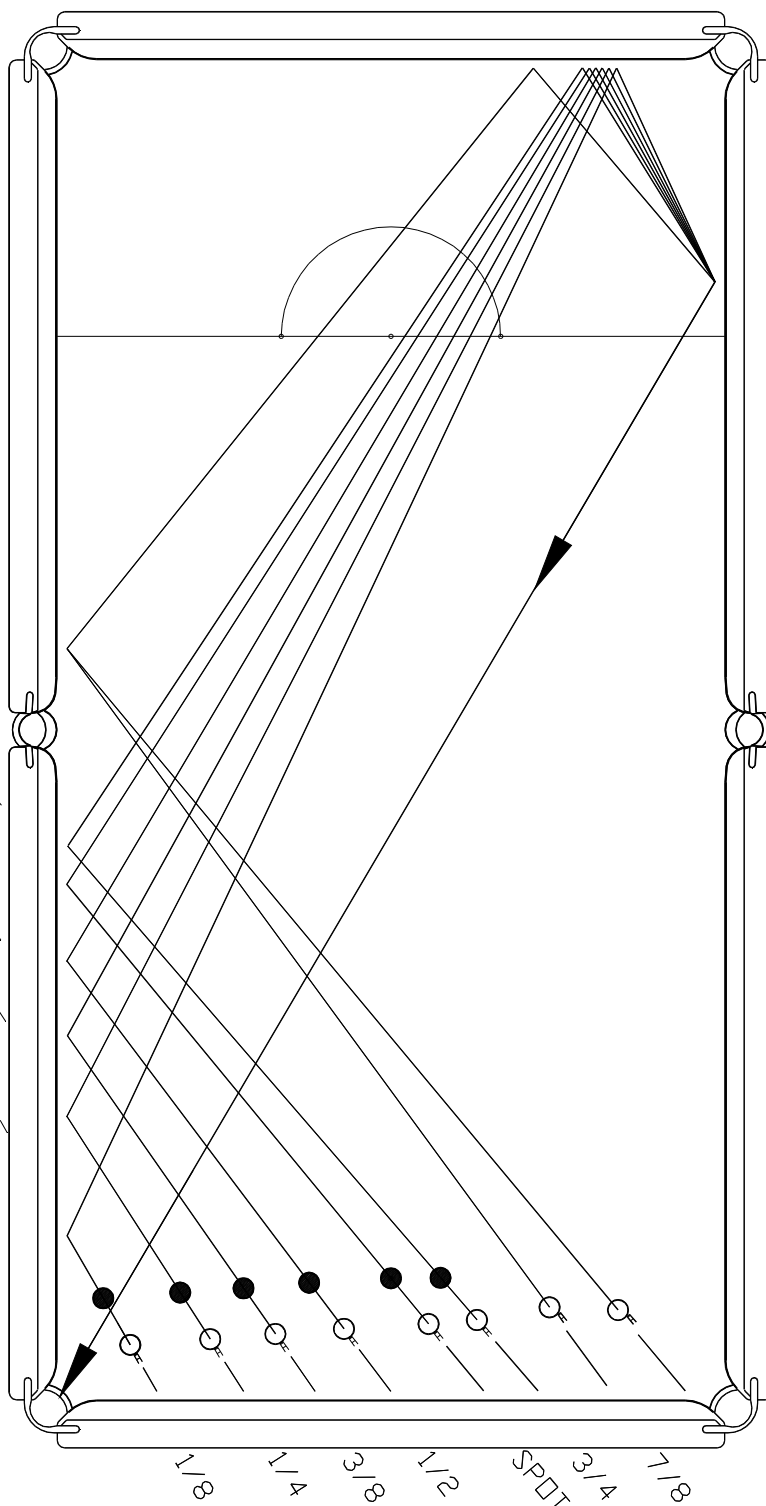
3/4



TABL GATHER 4A

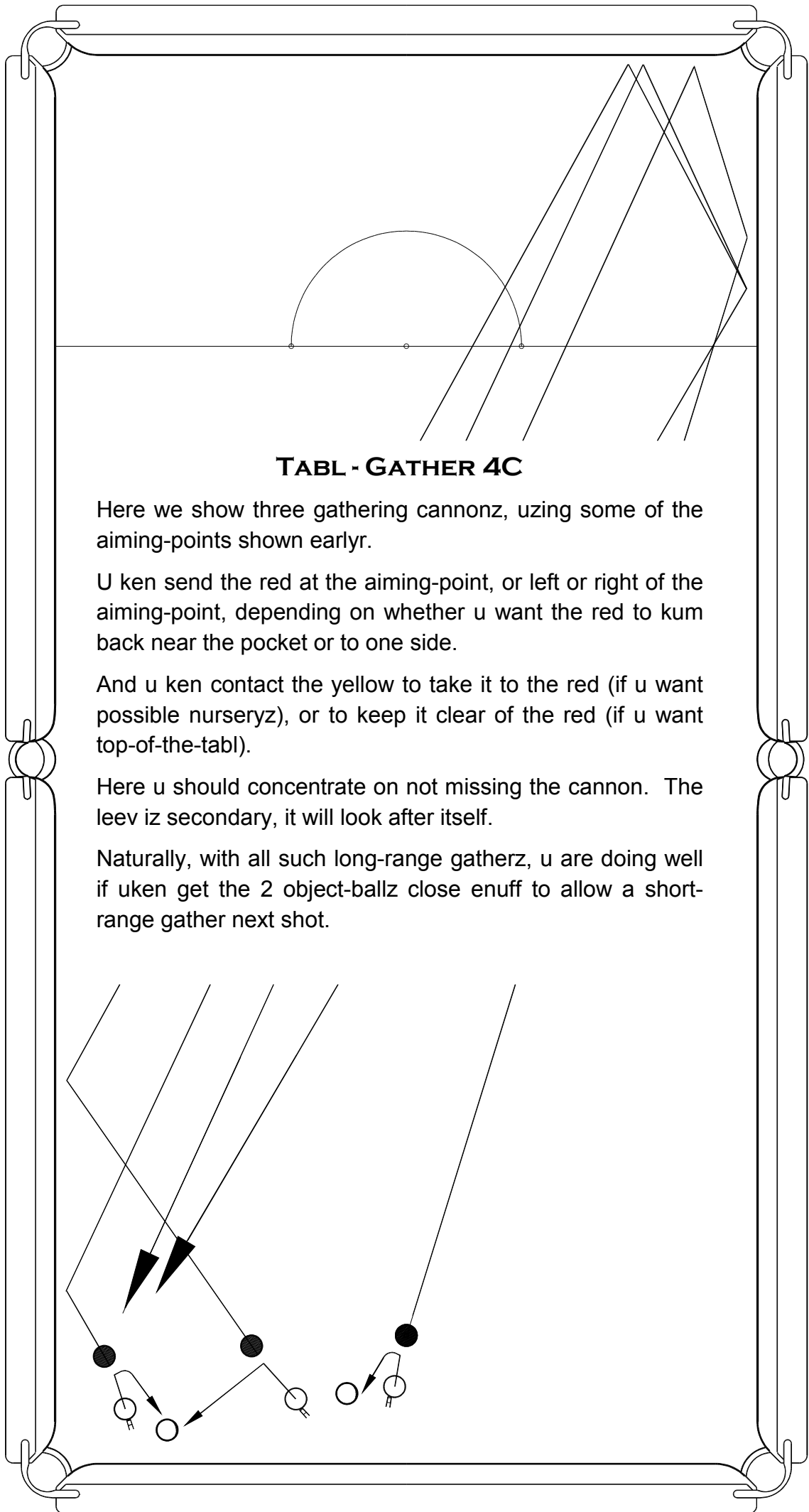
The red iz attracted to the right-top-pocket if hit towards the mirror-image of the left-baulk-pocket. This happens koz the red iz hit hard, and it haz not lost all of its stun before it gets to the side-cushion. It iz the retained stun that givz the red the friendly trajectory. A softish shot would giv the familiar narrow rebound-angle, xcept for the case of the $\frac{3}{4}$ point where the rebound-angle would be about the same. A very hard shot from these points would probably put the red into the left-baulk-pocket. The mirror-image of the left-baulk-pocket often coincides with the left-baulk-pocket of the adjoining tabl, if the tablz are 1600mm apart. Anyhow u ken soon check the aiming-point for yor home tabl. It might coincide with something on the wall. I once put the back-rest of a chair in the right spot, for a club championship, but i wouldn't cheat nowadays.

TABL GATHER 4B. In the same drawing, but not shown (u know what i meen), the qball will also follow these trajectoryz if u uze som running-side -- a rolling qball would return to near The Spot -- here i meen the qball on its own, ie with the red off the tabl. This ken giv u a handy gather, az we shall see later (see 4D). The need for running-side feels weird. Don't uze too much running-side, or the qball will hit the left-baulk-pocket, or the side-cushion before the right-top-pocket. Hitting the qball at 1 o'clock will suffice. Don't be tempted to uze check-side, it haz the opposite effect to what u want, it only makes the return worse. Az i said, this feels weird -- it goze against school books (az usual). In the same drawing i hav shown that the qball iz attracted to the right-top-pocket, from the $\frac{7}{8}$ th point if u uze some running-side, and from the left-top-pocket if u uze just a littl running-side, both aiming just right of the middle-pocket.



CUSHIONZ

It almost goze without saying that cushionz vary az the cushion-cloth wearz with age. In addition to the uzual differencez from tabl to tabl. Very new cushion cloths are a pain, the rebound-angle feelz like it iz half of uzual. Wiping with a wet towel will fix this in minutes -- there iz no need to wait weeks for a cushion to wear-in -- wet-wiping should be standard practis.



TABL - GATHER 4C

Here we show three gathering cannonz, uzing some of the aiming-points shown earlyr.

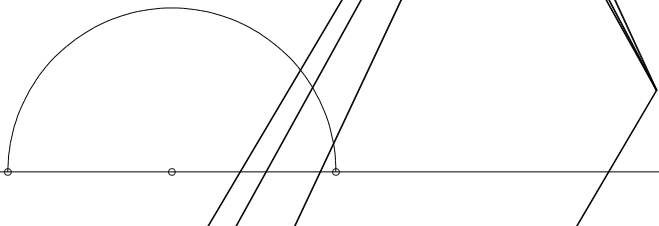
U ken send the red at the aiming-point, or left or right of the aiming-point, depending on whether u want the red to kum back near the pocket or to one side.

And u ken contact the yellow to take it to the red (if u want possible nurseryz), or to keep it clear of the red (if u want top-of-the-tabl).

Here u should concentrate on not missing the cannon. The leev iz secondary, it will look after itself.

Naturally, with all such long-range gatherz, u are doing well if uken get the 2 object-ballz close enuff to allow a short-range gather next shot.

TABL - GATHER 4D



Here we show three coverz where we use the aiming-points to hopefully score and hopefully leev good pozyz. We havta uze a littl running-side with each. We judge the contact on yellow to giv the qball the dezired line to the aiming-point. If the angle iz narrow, we havta contact the yellow az thin az possible, and uze more running-side. If the angle iz wide, we might havta uze some stun to giv the qball the line, plus some running-side also (alwayz).

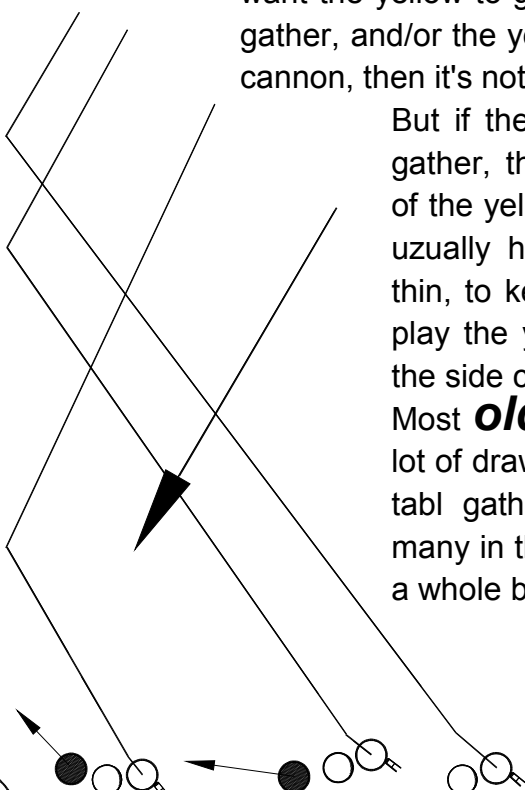
In the middle pozyz shown, we make the yellow push the red to the corner to maximize our chance of a cannon.

In the third pozyz, we hav been playing postman'z-knock and hav snookered ourselvez on the red, which iz near the pocket. Most playerz would automatically play a masse'. But the Tabl-Gather haz a better than 50/50 chance of scoring, so pleez yaself.

For some pozyz, u should think about where u want the yellow to go. If u are keen on a good gather, and/or the yellow iz unlikely to block the cannon, then it's not a problem.

But if there iz no chance of a good gather, then try to minimize the risk of the yellow blocking the cannon. U uzzually havta play the yellow really thin, to keep it short of the red, or u play the yellow thickish to take it up the side cushion, ie out of the way.

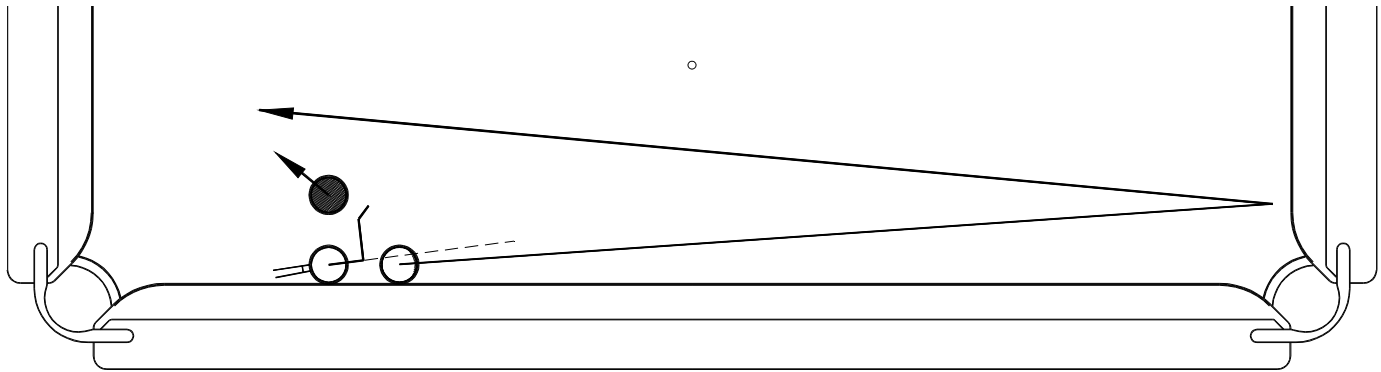
Most **old books** hav a few or a lot of drawingz showing all manner of tabl gatherz, so i won't show very many in this chapter. U could devote a whole book to theze alone.



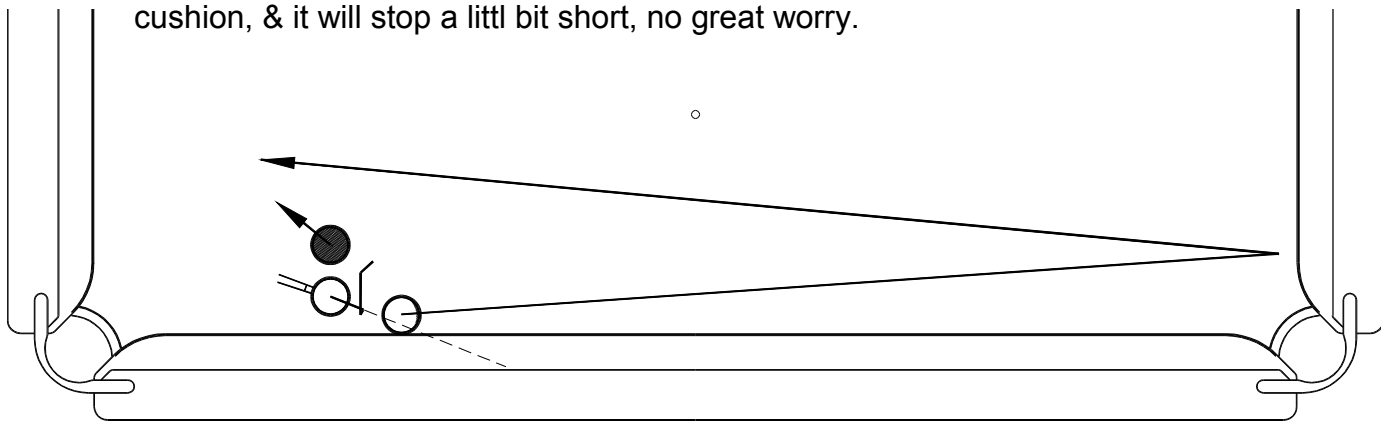
2 STANDARD CONTACTS

3/4 BALL SCREW-GATHERZ

TABL - GATHER 5A Here we perhaps made a mess of a turnabout or something -- so we set up this pozzzy intentionally -- placing the qball & another on the cushion. A three-quarter ball screw ken now giv a nice gather az shown. The main thing iz to leev an eezy hazard for insurance.



TABL - GATHER 5B We messed up a slip-throo or something -- so we set this pozzzy up intentionally -- the qball iz a half-ball off the cushion. A three-quarter ball screw, onto the cushion (Y-C-R), ken giv a nice gather az shown. If the yellow catchez a bit of the jaw it will bring it back closer to the cushion, & it will stop a littl bit short, no great worry.

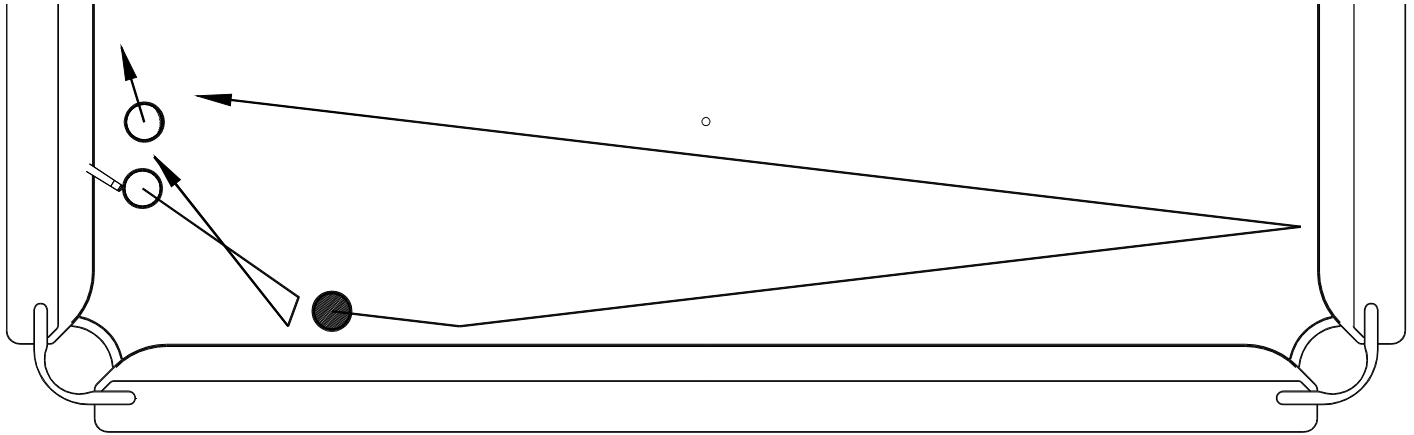


STANDARD POZZYZ & CONTACTS

5A & 5B are our **standard 2 pozzyz** & our **standard 3/4 ball contacts** for these sorts of screw-gatherz. They are the equivalent of our standard half-ball loozer & half-ball winner reference anglz -- we judge varyationz by relating them to theze 2 standard pozzyz. So, if the qball iz further off the cushion -- or if the gap to the yellow iz larger -- or if the ballz are in the middle of the cushion etc etc -- we change our aiming point etc etc accordingly. All billiardz iz like this -- if u praktis.

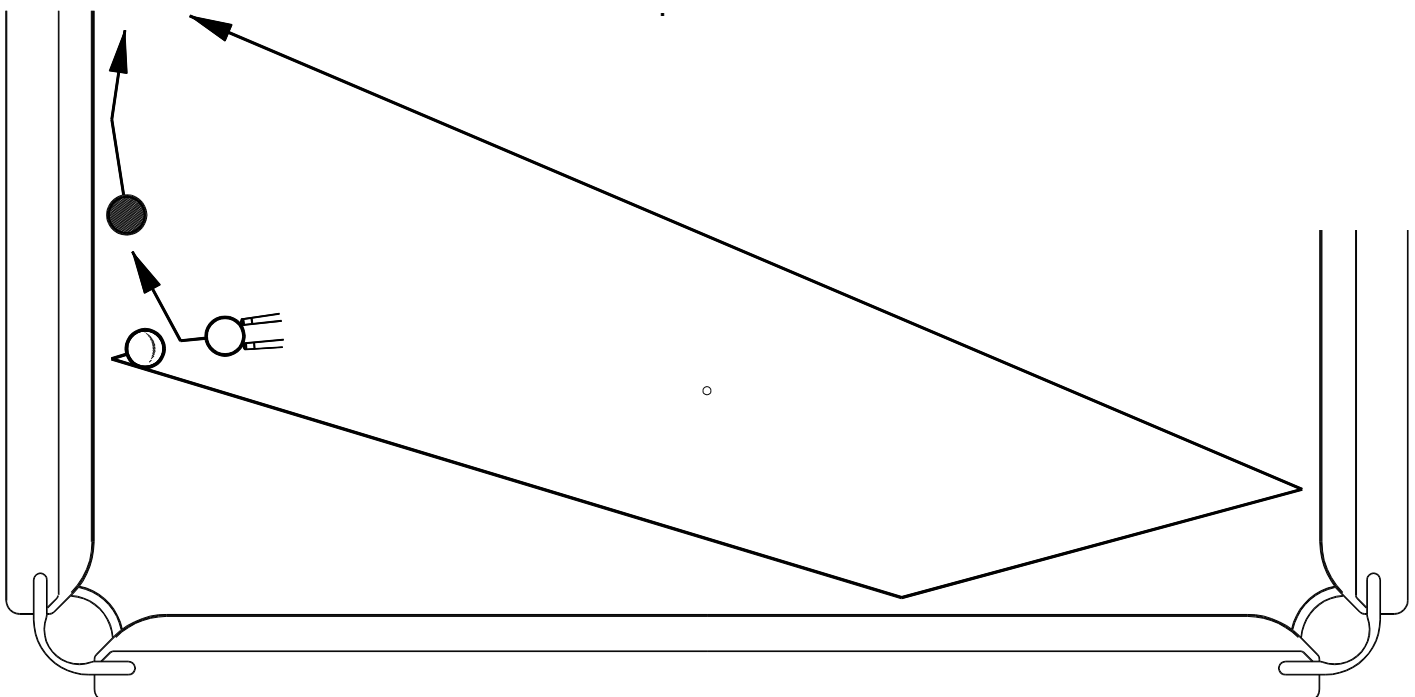
WALLY SPECIAL

TABL - GATHER 5C This iz a Wally-Special -- from the film. If Wally got into trouble near the corner he played a couple of cannonz to spread the ballz to giv the pozzzy shown. Then he would play three-quarter ball on red, with maximum right-hand-side, hitting the qball at perhaps 4 o'clock. This could reinstate nurseryz, from nowhere. Of course he would do this near the left-top-pocket, koz he woz left-handed (xcept when uzing the jiggerz). This shot takes some practice. The uzual stuff-up iz to hit the red too thin and jaw it (or pot it).



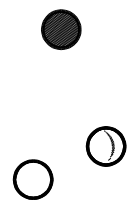
COCKED HAT DOUBLE

TABL - GATHER 5D Here u uzually needta uze left-hand-side or right-hand-side to giv the yellow the correct anglz, & uze stun of course. The tendency iz to underhit the yellow -- u need lotsa pace. And u tend to get too much angl on yellow, which sendz it up nearer the middle-pocket. U will tend to overcook the check-side or running-side also, giving too littl or too much angl. Sidespin makes a lot of difference to the yellow angl -- it throwz it more than u think. U will uzually send red further than u think, which iz ok, koz u will uzually send yellow closer to the middle-pocket than u think. But hit hard, koz all of yor eggz are in one basket here.



POIZON

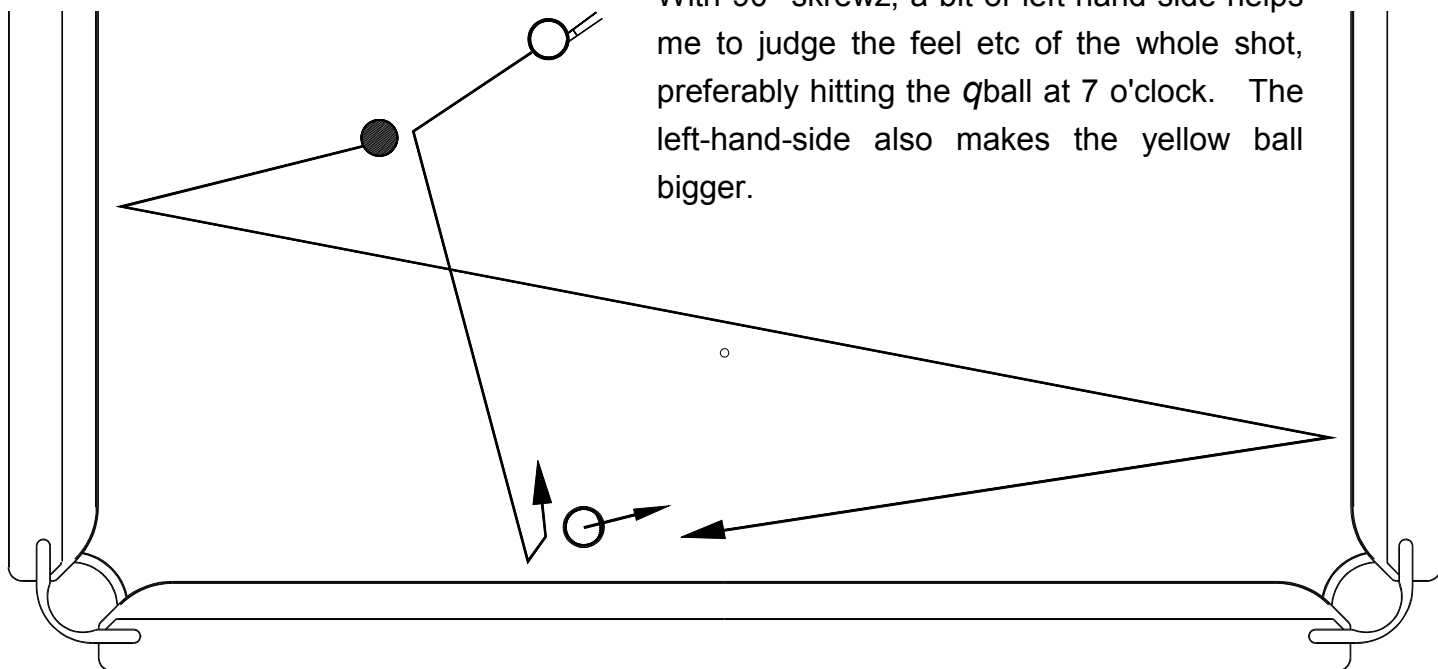
GATHER 5E showz a poizonus pozzy. U are tempted to doubl-doubl the yellow, to gather near the red. But this sort of shot iz almost allwayz impossibl, u karnt avoid a doubl-kiss if u want to land quietly on red. The yellow would havtabe more than **2 ballz off** the cushion to hav any chance of getting this sort of double-double gather.



MURT SPECIAL

TABL - GATHER 5F Here u ken play a thin loozer or u ken pot the red. But u notice that the skrew-cannon angle to the yellow iz about 90° , which iz our old friendly half-ball skrew angle. So, u play the gather-double shown. Murt showed me this one. Firstly, u havta pick a kontakt on red that will do the trick, ie thick enuff to send the red to near the yellow off 2 cushionz. I find that a $5/8^{\text{th}}$ ball kontakt on red iz my first choice, but this iz uzually not negotiable, u must pick a kontakt that promotes the red properly. U might hav the option of hitting the red $3/4$ ball, with perhaps more left-hand-side, if that's what u prefer.

With 90° skrewz, a bit of left-hand-side helps me to judge the feel etc of the whole shot, preferably hitting the *q*ball at 7 o'clock. The left-hand-side also makes the yellow ball bigger.

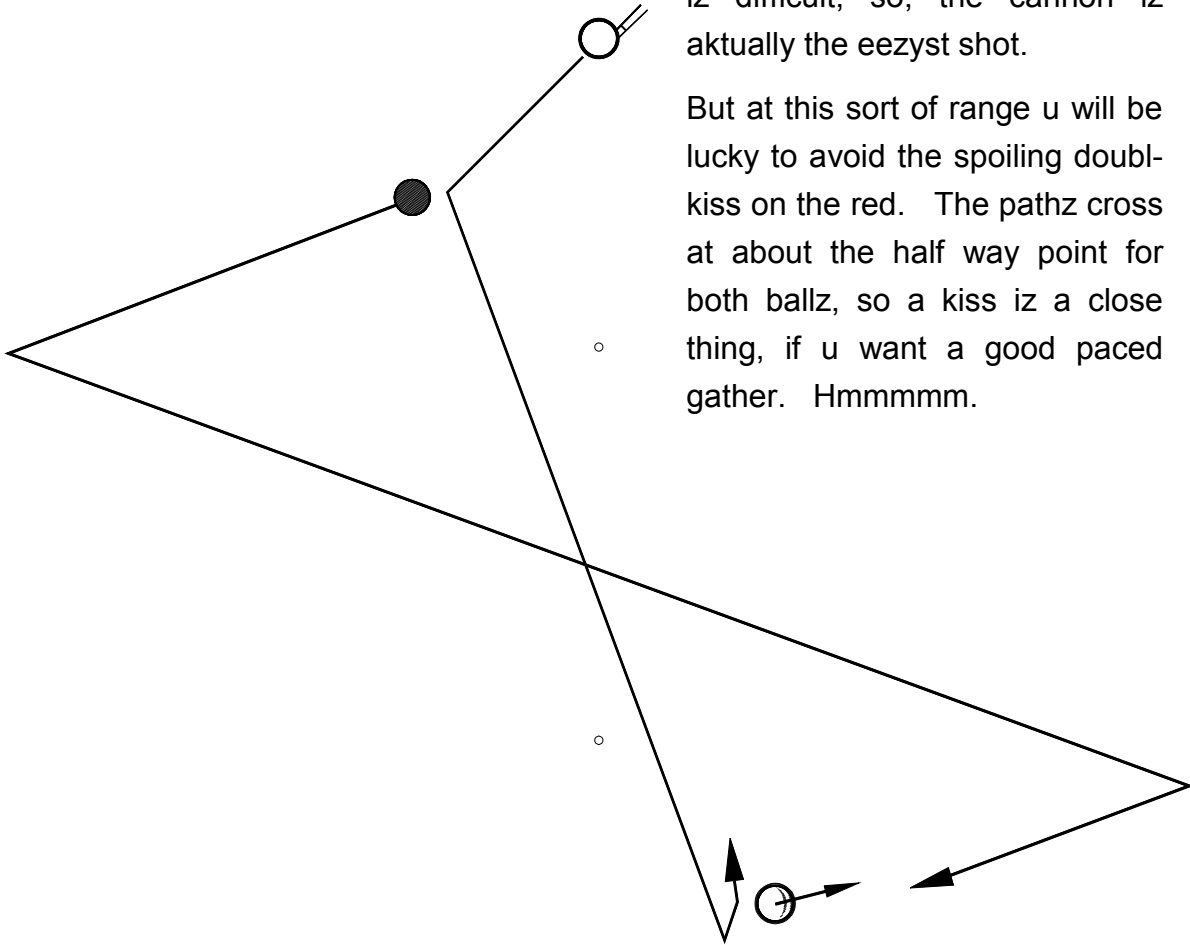


CLOSE THING

TABL - GATHER 5G

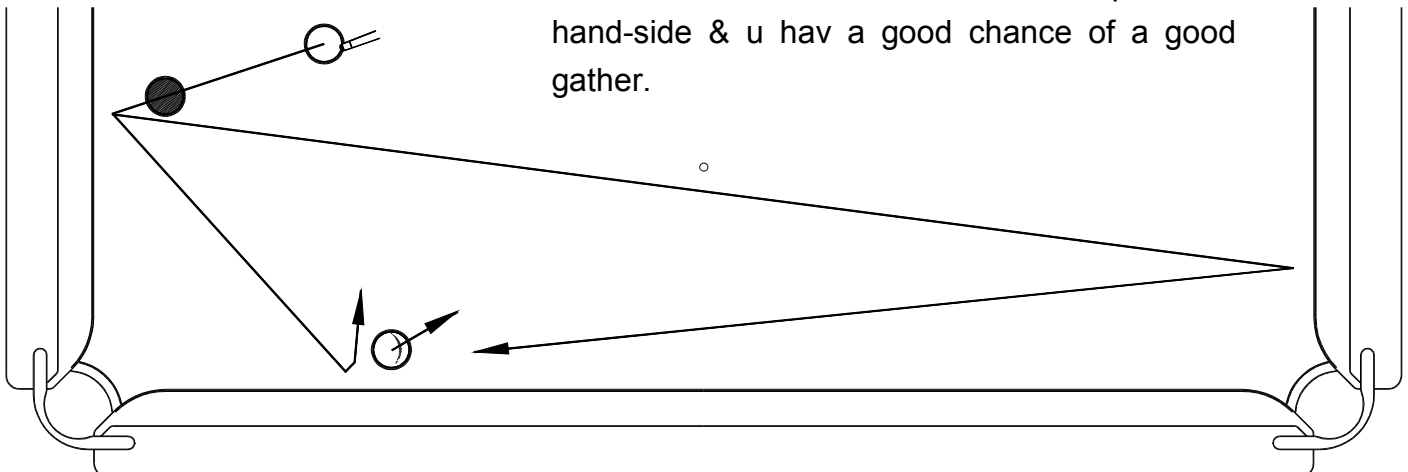
This iz similar to 5F. The pot red iz difficult, so, the cannon iz actually the eezyst shot.

But at this sort of range u will be lucky to avoid the spoiling doubl-kiss on the red. The pathz cross at about the half way point for both ballz, so a kiss iz a close thing, if u want a good paced gather. HmMMMM.



MURT SPECIAL

TABL - GATHER 5H Murt showed me this one. Run-throo with a bit of top & left-hand-side & u hav a good chance of a good gather.



LONG 3/4 BALL GATHERZ

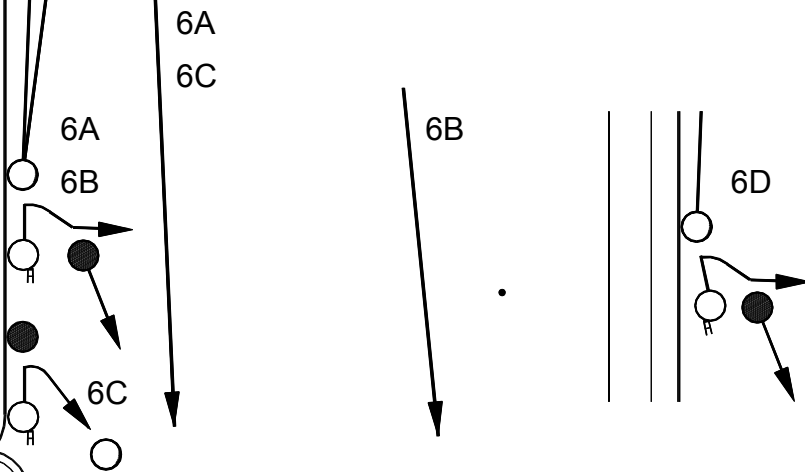
TABL - GATHER 6A Here the yellow & qball are on or near the cushion. We aim at the center of yellow, hitting the qball with screw (not too much) & right-hand-side (not too much), at 4:30 o'clock. Hit hardish, to bring the yellow back az shown.

TABL - GATHER 6B Az for 6A, but we aim a teeny bit right-of-center on yellow, & it kumz back to giv nice top-of-the-table pozzy, az shown. These types of shots ken also be played when the yellow & qball are both off the cushion etc etc.

TABL - GATHER 6C Here the red & qball are on or near the cushion near the pocket. We aim at the center of red, hitting the qball at 5 o'clock. Hit hardish, to bring the red back for a gather, az for 6A.

TABL - GATHER 6D In the xtra drawing, we show the qball a half-ball off the cushion. Here we ken get a gather by hitting the yellow a teeny bit left-of-center, with screw & left-hand-side,

TABL - GATHER 6E If the qball in 6D were 1 ball off the cushion (not shown) we would need to aim 3/4 ball on the left of yellow. Even so, the yellow would be likely to stop nearish the spot, which iz ok, koz the red will do its best to go there also.



PINK GATHERZ

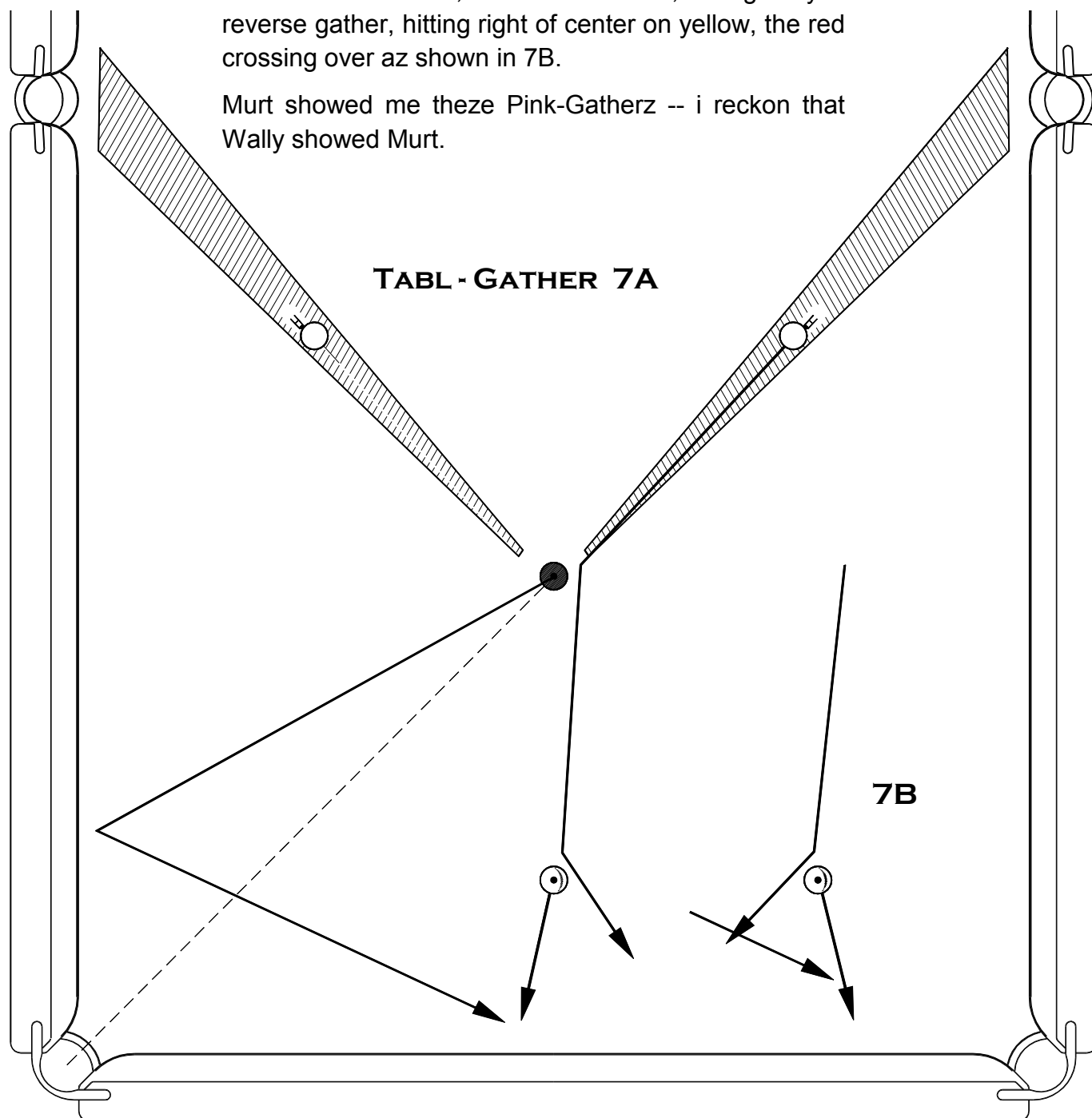
U are playing floating-yellow & the yellow coverz The Spot -- the potted red will now havta go on the Pyramid Spot, the Pink Spot in Snooker (spit), az shown here. The hatched zonez show where uken play a nice gathering cannon to get nurseryz -- played slower it would leed back to floating-white, which wouldn't interest a Cushion-Crawler, koz a nice gather iz not difficult, if u praktis. The right-hand zone (left here) iz not very friendly for right-handed playerz.

The *q*ball shown iz in the ideal pozy -- the *q*ball to red line passez throo the center of the pocket. We hit the red 5/8 ball, with a bit of left-hand-side -- hitting yellow 3/4 ball, or at least more than 1/2 ball. The red & yellow are magnetik, if the pace iz good.

The zone iz very narrow. The widest angle in the zone needz left-hand-side & swerv -- hitting the red perhaps 3/4 ball (thicker than u think). The narrowest angle in the zone needz right-hand-side & swerv -- hitting the red perhaps 3/4 ball -- in which case the red'z trajectory might inklood the top-cushion -- & the contact on yellow might be less than 1/2 ball.

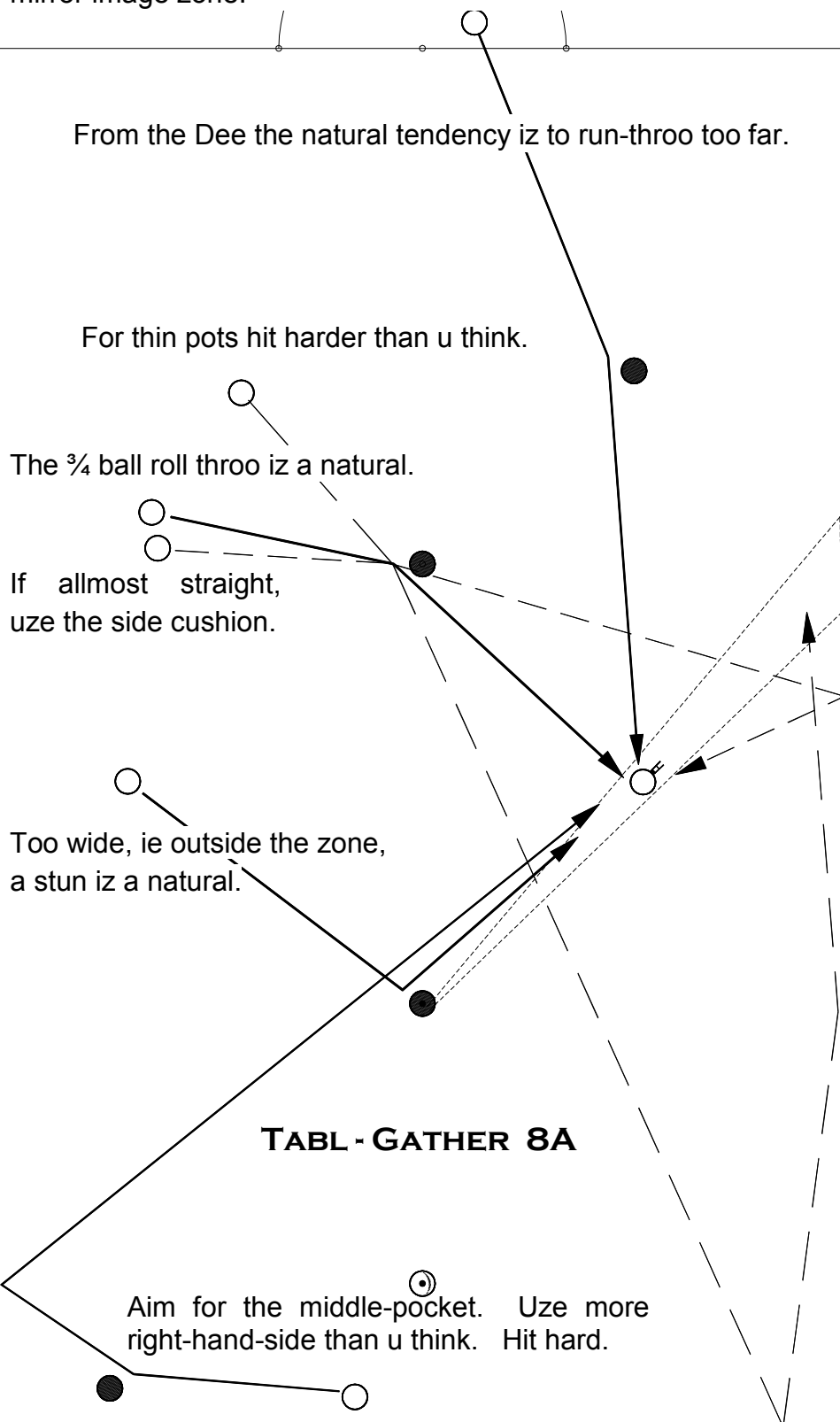
7B If too wide, outside the zone, u might try a reverse gather, hitting right of center on yellow, the red crossing over az shown in 7B.

Murt showed me theze Pink-Gatherz -- i reckon that Wally showed Murt.



GETTING POZZY

The most difficult thing with Pink-Gatherz iz getting the qball into the zone. These are the basic winnerz that ken get u there. All need praktis -- they are tricky -- they feel weird at first. See for yorself -- i won't say much here. The drawn zone iz friendly for Right-Handerz, but Leftyz will want to uze the mirror image zone.

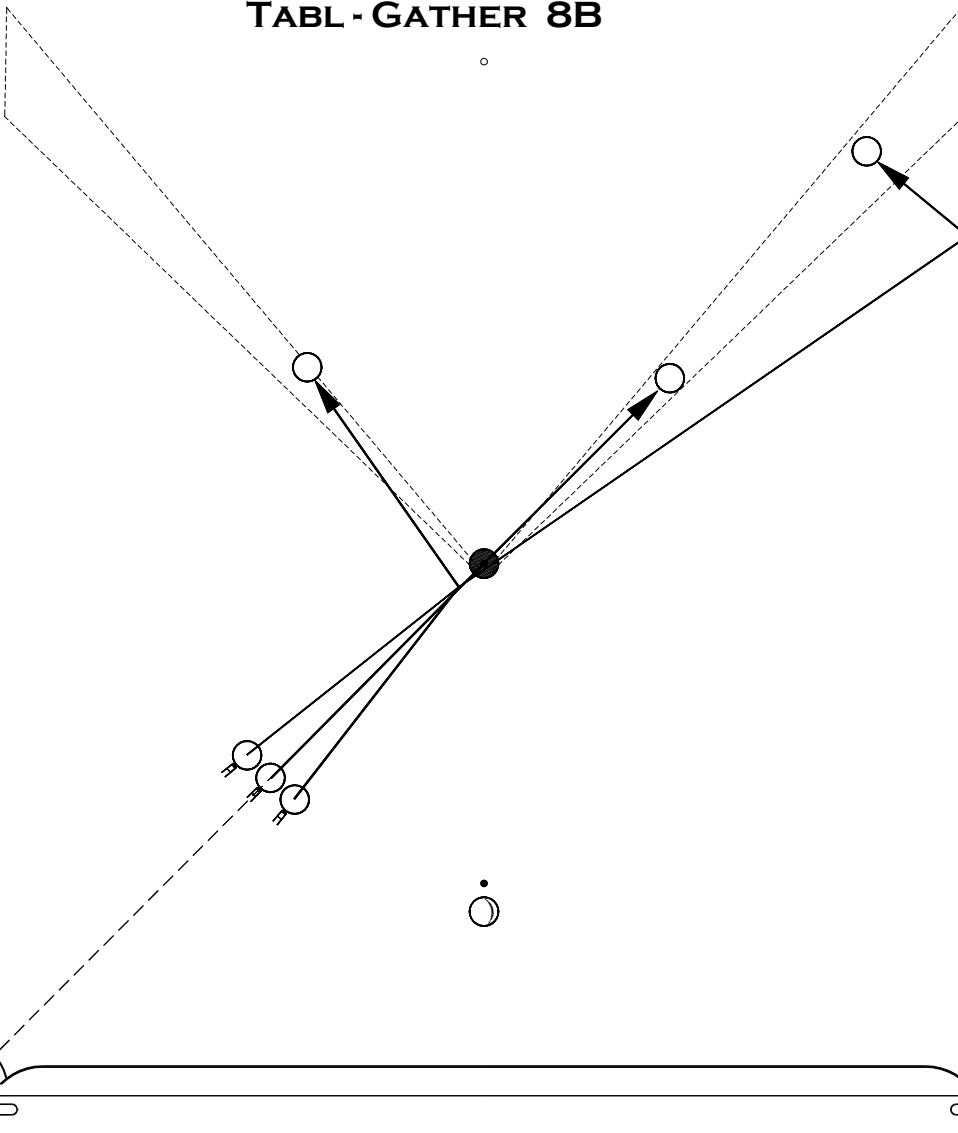


WILL IT SPOT ??

Here we have been playing floating-yellow & we bumped the yellow too close to The Spot. We didn't know whether the red would spot --- hence we potted the red to leev the qball on the corner-pocket-to-mid-pocket-line, az shown. With the qball in one of the 3 pozzyz shown we ken pot the red in the middle pocket & leev the qball in a Pink-Gather-Zone by playing a Stun, or a Roll-Throo, az shown. Or if the referee duz manage to spot the red on The Spot we will continue with floating-yellow.

The Times, Feb 1930..... *With the break at 388, McConachy drew the referee's attention to the fact that there was not room for the red to be placed on the spot as the object white was so near it. When it was placed on the pyramid spot it made the position much more difficult, but McConachy regained position with a clever cushion cannon, & he was loudly applauded when he completed the fifth hundred.....*

TABL - GATHER 8B



Dazzling Artistry Preferred to Repetition-stroke Breaks

*My billiard ideal would, if i had a De Quincey at my elbow, be best expressed in a dissertation upon billiards considered as one of the fine arts. This is making a big claim for the game we love, but i feel compelled to state that my ideal would fain give billiards the **glamour of the arts** rather than the **cold precision of mechanical exactitude** or the abstruse intellectual perfection of a mathematical formula.*

*But, objects the iconoclast, your ideal must be shattered by the irrefutable logic of facts. It must be the billiard player's one ideal to win his game by every means the game allows, & it must follow as a logical sequence that the man who can score the **greatest number of points** in a perfectly fair manner must reach the **highest ideal** it is possible to offer the cueist.*

*But i am not quite prepared to admit the infallibility of this argument, for if it is beyond question, then the man who could make the **greatest number of spot strokes** would be the finest billiard player extant, or, to take a more modern & even more applicable illustration, players who cultivated the **notorious anchor stroke** could start in their youth & play on until their break was terminated either by the senile decay of the player or the effects of time on the implements.*

*This is scoring if you like, it is making life itself one long drawn out break, it is taking a draft on eternity to achieve the false ideal that **continuity of scoring** is the Alpha & Omega of billiards.*

*There is no reason why an **anchor break** should not become a family inheritance. If it was commenced on a good strong table it might be handed down from father to son even to the third & fourth generation.*

And when the great, great grandson of the man who originally anchored the balls had brought the family break well into the mazy millions of astronomical calculations, the ideal of the logical cueist would be reached, the scion of the anchor house would have proved what can be done in the way of big breaks, while full-sized oaks would be growing on the grave of the opponent of the first of the family to anchor the balls, & the last trumpet would be the sole means of letting him know that it was his turn to play.

*Is this a billiard ideal worth living for, worth playing for.?? I think not. **Life is far too short & time too fleeting** for us to idealise the player who strives to transform himself into a perpetual scoring machine, & even if we ignore the spot & the anchor it seems to me that the legitimate scoring opportunities afforded by billiards may be strained to a point which spoils the ideal game.*

*Here, i admit, i am on delicate & debatable ground. It may fairly be argued that if a player makes a plethora of great breaks by **supreme positional control** of the balls, by orthodox billiards played to perfection, then he is justly entitled to be hailed as champion of champions & to wear the wreath of immortality which belongs to he who approaches close to the ideal in this prosaic world.*

Again, however, the spirit of doubt disturbs my mind, & tempts me to deny the laurels of fame even to the magnificent cueman who shall compile an amazing plentitude of truly wonderful breaks in point of size made by controlling the balls in a style which seems scarcely human in its sheer perfection of strength & position.

*Let us watch a player of this type in action with the balls favourably placed for a break. See how he plays the **losing hazards** until, very quickly, as a rule, the **drop cannon** presents itself & is accomplished in so masterly a manner that better position for the **top-of-the-table** game could not be left if the cueist were allowed to pick up the balls & place them where he liked.*

*Then follows the alternating cannon & red winner, or, perchance, a **short run of nurseries** along the top-cushion until a **loser** has to be negotiated. This is played with an effect beyond criticism, once again the **drop cannon** is worked for, played with supreme skill, & the **top-of-the-table game** brought forth yet again as a scoring method which cannot be excelled.*

So the break progresses, hundred follows hundred like bullets from a maxim gun until the human element supervenes at last. Some stroke is not handled with the ultra-perfection of its fellows, the harmony of the break is disturbed, & the player makes way for his adversary after adding to his score a break which takes place of honour in the Press next day.

All this is very clever, astonishingly clever, but it is **the skill of the craftsman** rather than **the ideal of the artist** which is displayed in such an effort. Such a break, a break abounding in positional perfection, is fearfully & wonderfully made, but its merits lie in **the utilisation of the commonplace, it workmanlike rather than artistic**, & has but little connection with billiards as a **fine art**.

Years ago, at the Egyptian Hall, i exploited most of the orthodox scoring methods, until in the course of time i discovered that beyond the drab region of mere skill there lay a realm of beautiful art waiting for its devotees. This art is difficult to define in words, it is difficult to even show it in one stroke at a time on the billiard table, because so much depends on the time & circumstances.

The temple of the highest art in billiards is only open when a man is able to score almost to his heart's content by playing the sound, safe, unshowy game. When a player has reached this stage in his billiard career (& more players have reached it than many people imagine), then he should

seek to exercise the creative spirit of the artist rather than the break-building capacity of the workman.

To make my meaning as clear as it can be made in words & diagrams, let us imagine that a great player in good form is faced by the leave shown in **Diagram 1** after he has made a couple of hundred or so.

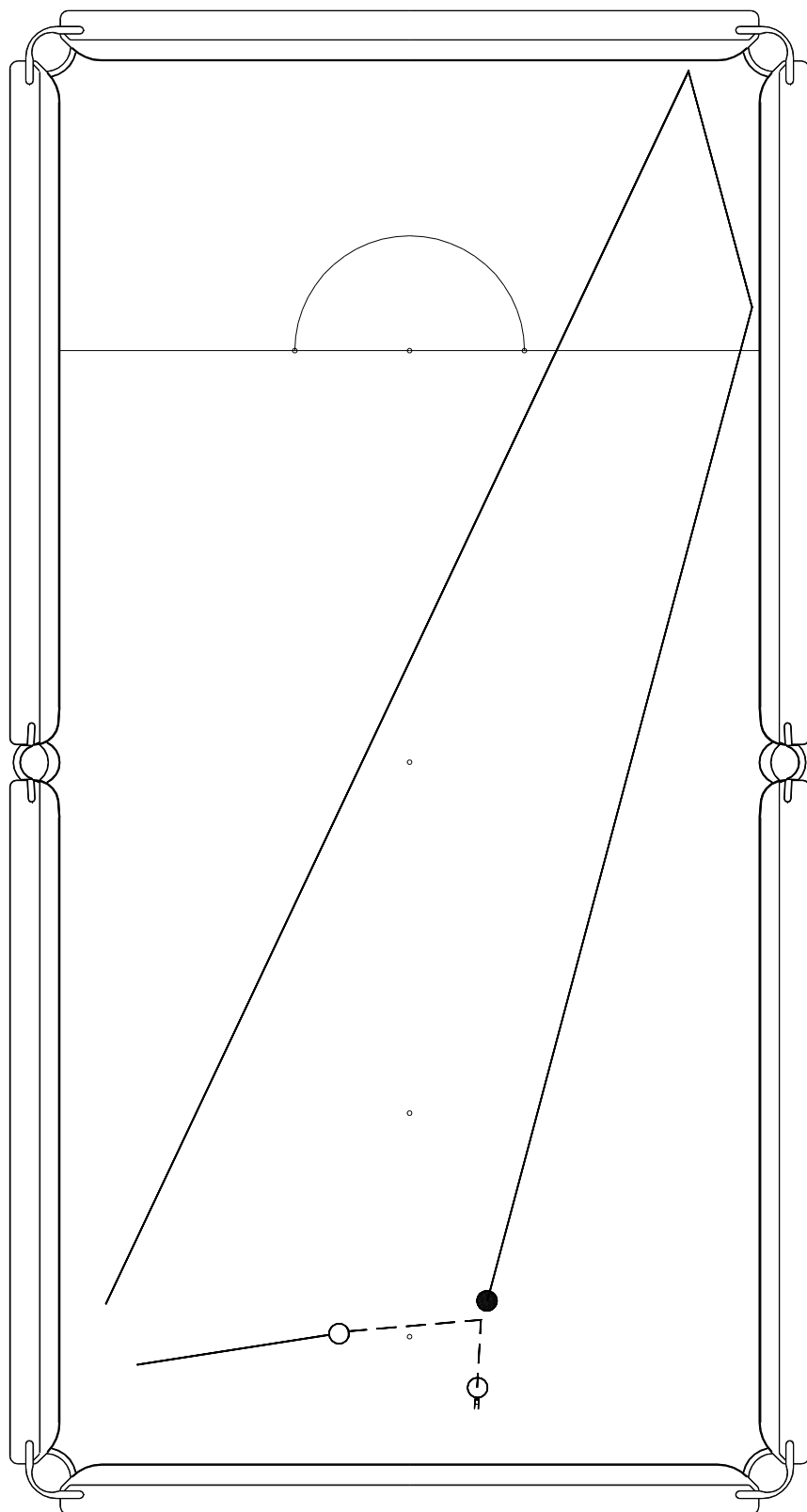
It will be seen that the leave presents the easiest of losers in the right top pocket that any player could desire to have if he only wanted a couple of points to win the game of his life.

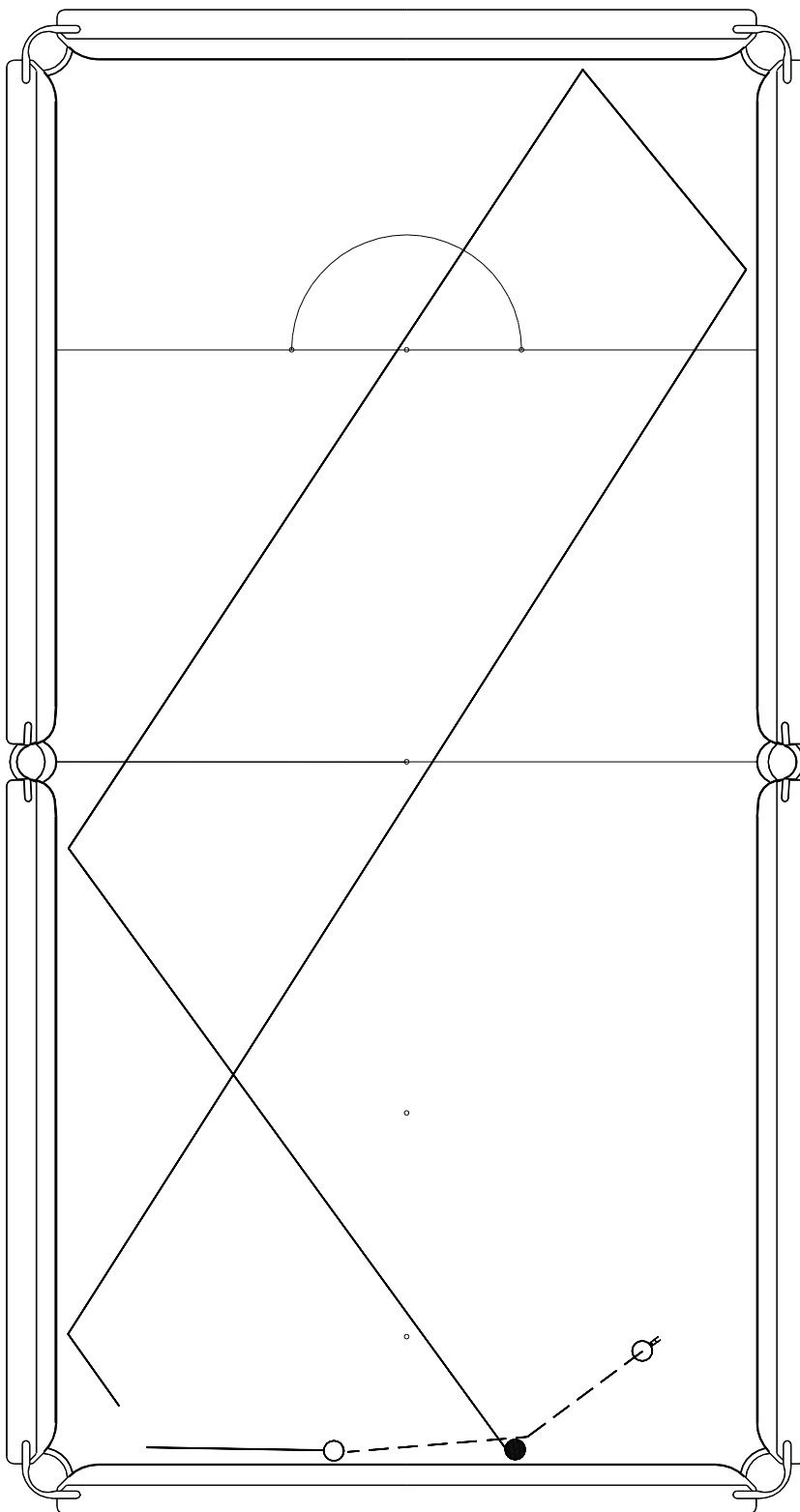
And, furthermore, it is most decidedly sound effective billiards to play the white loser.

The red is none too well placed, & if he white loser is handled with ordinary skill the next stroke should offer a good chance of bringing the red into play once again.

But if instead of the profitable & prosy white loser a **brilliant screw cannon is effected off the red ball**, sending the red speeding round the table like a ray of light until it comes to rest & **brings the three balls together in a neat, artistic cluster**, the billiard ideal is approached.

I know that such a stroke is full of **risks**, but it is also full of **poetry**, the charming poetry of motion, &, to my mind, playing it or leaving it alone **marks the distinction between a workman & an artist.**





Another stroke, illustrated by our **second diagram**, shows the red & the white just nicely clear of the top-cushion & about a yard apart.

The cueball is placed almost as well as it can be for the cannon off the red, & the stroke has to be very badly handled by a first-class exponent if the easiest of white losers into the right-top-pocket is not left after the cannon is made.

The red, too, should be brought well within the scoring area in the centre of the table, & no better leave to continue the break could be wished for.

But if, instead of this **everyday cannon**, the stroke is made by playing very full & hard on the red & making the cue ball travel in a half-stunned dreamy fashion along the top-cushion while **the red flies round the table & finally comes to rest near the right top pocket in close proximity to the second object-ball**, then the billiard artist may justly feel proud of something attempted, something done.

These are the strokes to send the blood tingling through the veins of the spectators, thy reveal the magic of the cue to the ordinary beholder as no amount of mere break building can do, &, to me, they represent the **ideal** in billiards.

In other words, my billiard ideal lies in the direction of playing difficult strokes for the sake of displaying the **beauties & possibilities** of the game to the best advantage, even

when such strokes are not demanded by the immediate positional or scoring requirements of the game.

And i should like to point out that this realisation of the ideal of the **game beautiful** is not without its **practical value**. The accomplished cueist who welds these rousing strokes into his ordinary game will seldom be at fault when faced by something extremely difficult in the way of a leave from which a break has to be made.

Then the **fine art of billiards** will come to his assistance, he will reap what he has sown by attempting the highest flights in the game, when a comfortable jog trot would have suited his immediate purpose, & he will learn that **the ideal** in billiards is worth attempting for its own sake. Last, but by no means least, the spectators are grateful to the billiards idealist, he gives them glimpses of the exquisite possibilities of the game, he shows them something that makes them feel like rising in their seats & breaking out into a cheer, & i think the man who does this is the **true artist, the supreme billiard idealist**.

