



Equipment Selection/Care

CUE SHAFT CARE

Most American cue makers use hard maple for the shaft material. Shafts are left naked. Usually, no coating is applied - at least not for the top 13-20 inches toward the tip. This makes a cue shaft very vulnerable to moisture transfer.

Cue wood is dried professionally, greatly reducing the tendency to warp. Still, a player should take extra pains to care for their cue.

Never store your cue in the trunk of your car. Never place it close to an outside wall, especially a concrete block wall in a basement. Never store it by laying it on the pool table. All these situations expose the cue to differing temperatures and/or amounts of moisture that can be absorbed. Cues especially warp when the temperature or humidity on one side of the cue is different than that on the other. These extreme differences can create expansion on one side of the cue and contraction on the other (warping).

USING THE CRUTCH

The Crutch, Rake or Mechanical Bridge (they are all the same) come into play when you are faced with a shot that you can't reach or when object balls interfere with your making a normal bridge. Two things to remember when Using the Crutch are:

- 1) Keep the bridge head a comfortable distance from the cue ball (if possible) to allow you enough room for warm up strokes and executing smoothly.
- 2) Hold the bridge stick down firmly on the table with your bridge hand. Never shoot unless the bridge is 100% firm and stable.

CHECK THAT TABLE

It's something that is hardly ever talked about, but students of the game should be introduced to the fact that sometimes tables aren't level. Even if a table started out level, buildings settle, cloth wears unevenly, moving tables around causes slates to shift, etc.

When playing on a table that you are not familiar with, take the time to slow roll a few shots next to and the length of each cushion and see if the ball drifts one way or another. Then shoot a few slow rolling shots from corner to corner across the center of the table. When it table is not level, the balls will usually always drifts toward one direction.

If you do discover rolls, don't complain, because you and your opponent are playing under the same conditions. However, use your knowledge to adjust your aim on those slow rolling shots.