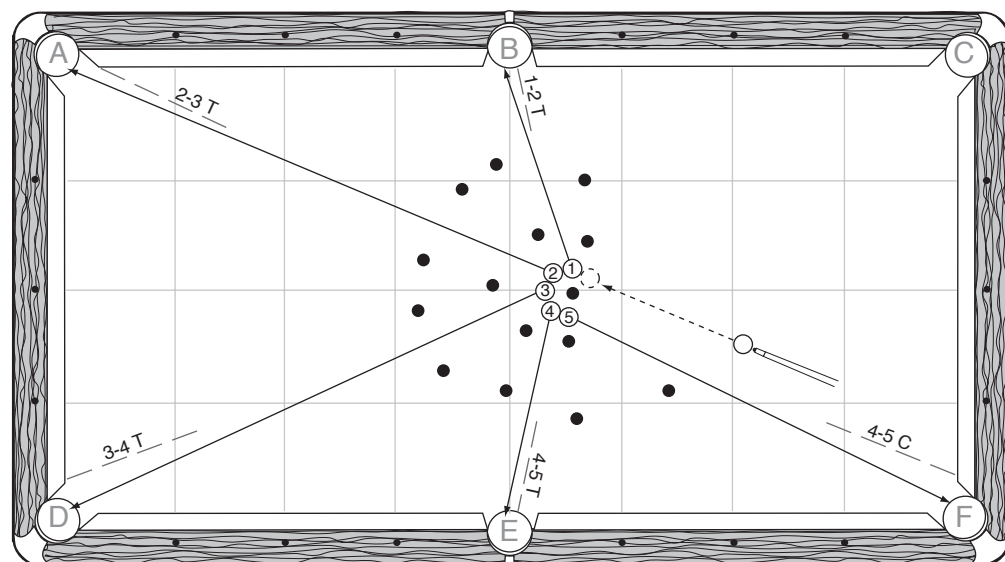
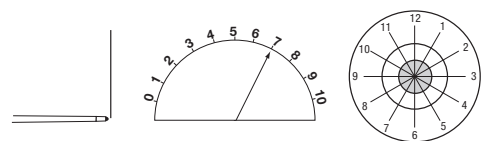


Slam Dunk (aka Smiley Face or Half Moon)



SUR: 3.5 Video
EXR: 2.5 ESPN
MSR: 95%



The first time I saw this shoot was on a video by Yoshikazu Kimura. Everyone loves this shot, which Earl Strickland christened the Slam Dunk. Others call it the Smiley Face or Half Moon Shot.

The set up is the big key to this shot because three of the balls must travel long distances to the corner pockets. So take care in lining up the combos and tangent lines as shown on the diagram. Hit the cue ball in the center and aim for a full hit on the 1-ball. Use a hard stroke. When practicing this shot, it helps to have a friend watch closely so they can tell you where each ball that misses hits the rail. This will help you to make the necessary adjustments. For instance, if the 2-ball hits to the left of Pocket A, you will need to move it clockwise just a little so that the tangent line points a little farther up the long rail.

You can place a series of object balls where the dots are located. This makes the shot even more impressive because the balls in the cluster appear to explode out of the center of the table. Once you've mastered this shot, you might try placing glasses of water where the dots are located. But be aware that an error could possibly damage the cloth.



Getting Waxed in Japan

I was in Japan for a show on TV when disaster struck on the Slam Dunk. Before an exhibition I always go over the table and check out my shots, especially the set-up shots. After evaluating the table I decided to go to dinner before the show. While I was gone the organizers waxed the balls to a bright shine. The producers wanted them to look their best for the show.

Before I left for dinner the balls looked immaculate. So when I went back to the table I didn't think the waxing would affect my shots. I was wrong. I set up the Slam Dunk with 13 shot glasses full of water spaced so that the balls would go between them.

When I shot hard into the 1-ball, it forced through a little more than I had planned for and it hit the point of the side pocket. It then bounced out across the table, breaking four of the glasses. I was reminded of why 13 is the unluckiest of numbers.

It was so quiet you could have heard a pin drop. Now when I do an exhibition and use glasses of water, I always leave this shot for last just in case. In all of the times I've played this shot, this is the only time I've spilled a drop. Whew!