
Supporting narrated video (NV) demonstrations, high-speed video (HSV) clips, technical proofs (TP), and all past articles are available online at billiards.colostate.edu. Reference numbers used in the articles help you locate the resources on the website.

A “golden break” is where you pocket the 9 “on the snap” for an early game victory. Sometimes, this occurs due to blind luck, but there are several techniques that can improve your chances with skill and knowledge. Below, I summarize all the approaches demonstrated in my recent YouTube video ([NV L.5](#)) covering this topic.

First, let’s take a brief look at standard 9-ball break strategy from online video [NV J.74](#). As shown in **Image 1**, with no special rules in effect, most pros use a side break, where the cue ball (CB) is placed close to the side rail. With a good rack and a square hit, you will pocket the near wing ball (the 8 in Image 1). With the right speed, it is easy to get a look at the 1 in either upper corner, based on break speed.

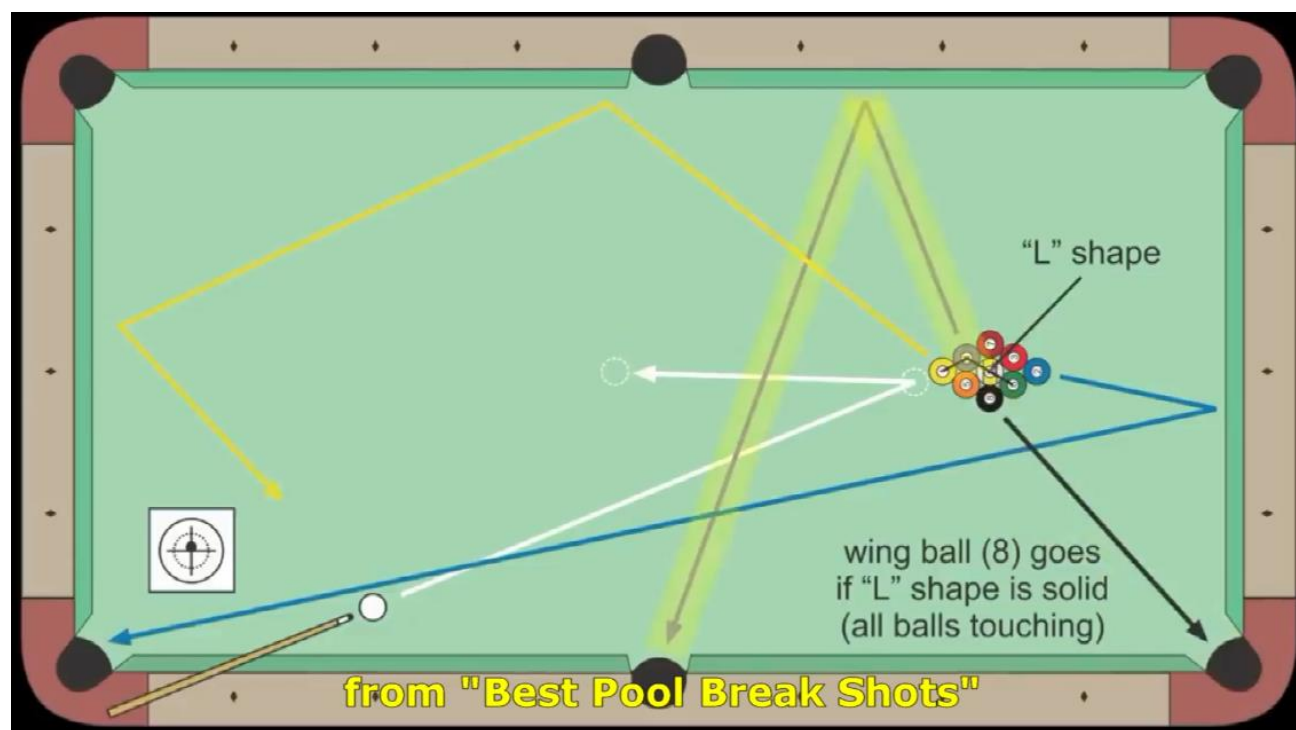


Image 1 Standard 9-ball break strategy

As illustrated in **Image 2**, one golden break approach is a cut break, where you hit the 1 non-square to send the CB off the side rail into the stationary 9, to pocket it in the corner or side. Obviously, this approach works only if the balls are racked tightly, ensuring the 9 doesn’t move much or at all with the initial hit on the 1. For advice on how to get a tight rack, see the “[how to get a tight rack](#)” break resource page at billiards.colostate.edu. As demonstrated in online video [NV L.5](#), the 9 can go in the corner or the side, the CB can carom off another ball and still pocket the 9, and the 9 can be banked cross-side or cross-corner.

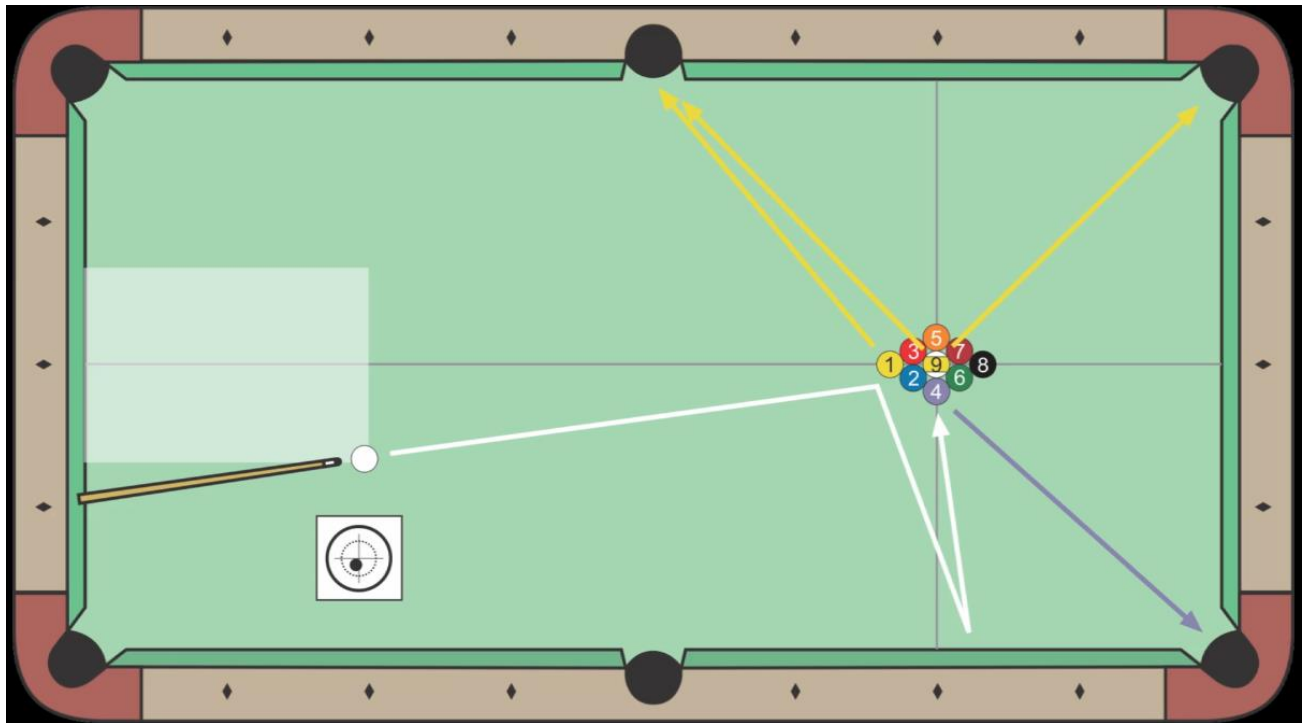


Image 2 Cut break from the box

As shown in **Image 3**, another approach is to hit the 1 squarely from close to the center of the table to combo the back ball (the 8) into the 9. This can pocket the 9 in the side or the upper corner. As with the cut break, this approach works only if the 9 remains nearly stationary during the initial hit on the 1. In online video [NV L.5](#), I show many examples of pocketing the 9 in both pockets.



Image 3 Back-ball-combo golden break

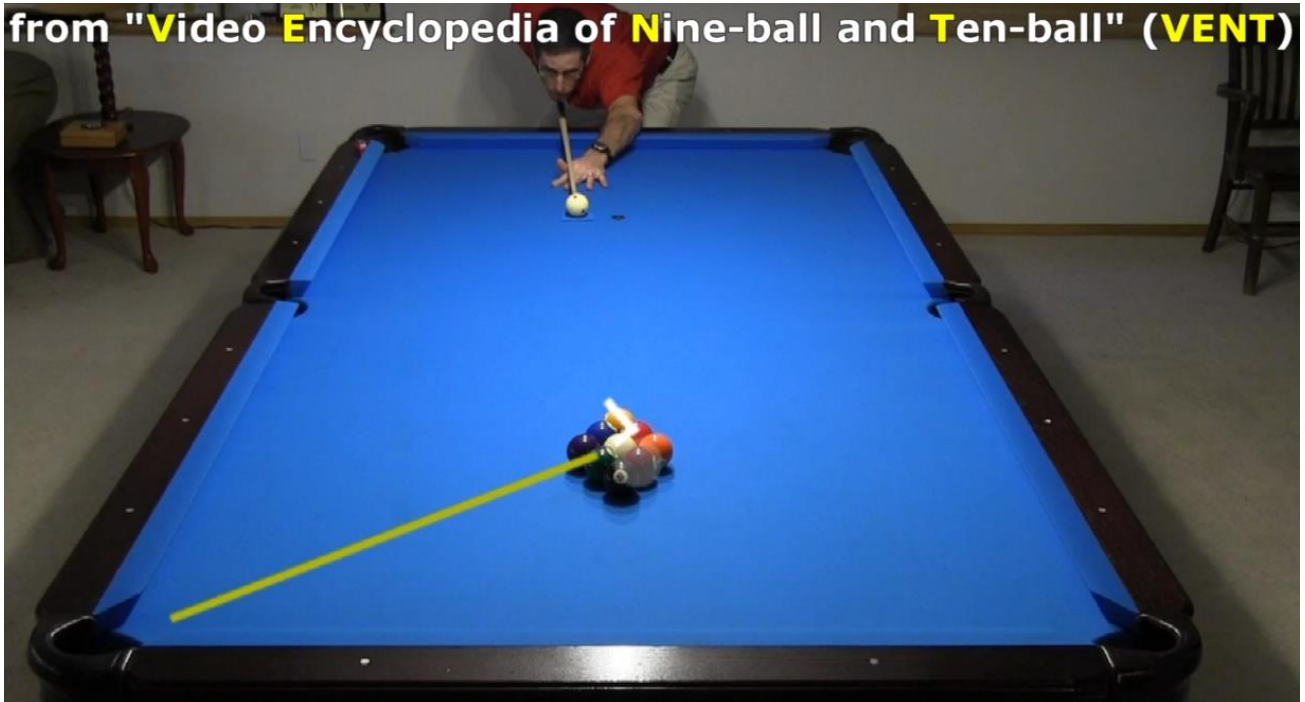
One advantage of the back-ball-combo approach is the 8 is also natural to kiss off the 9 to go in the opposite side. In **Image 4**, I am showing this with my trusty 30° rule peace sign. As demonstrated in the video, a wide range of hits on the 9 will send the 8 to the side. Also, if you hit the 1 with too much angle, it is equivalent to breaking from the side with a square hit, so the wing ball goes in the corner as expected. And with even more cut on the 1, you can pocket the wing ball and the 1 in the side. And with a fuller hit on the 1, but still with a slight cut, the 1 can also go to the upper corner. All these cases are also demonstrated in the video. The problem with the back-ball-combo approach is that often, even with a good hit, the 8 doesn't go, the 9 doesn't go, and nothing else goes, potentially leaving your opponent with an easy runout.



Image 4 Natural back ball kiss into the side

A final way to get a golden break is if there are gaps in the rack behind the 9. Sometimes gaps in the rack are difficult to avoid, and it is helpful to be able to read a rack to your advantage. **Image 5** from the [Video Encyclopedia of Nine-ball and Ten-ball \(VENT\)](#) illustrates this approach. With a gap between the 6&9, the 9 ball has room to kiss off the 7 toward the corner. Breaking from the same side of the table as the gap, in this case on the 6 side, gives the best chance to pocket the 9. The CB will send energy through the 1 and 3 into the 9 so it can kiss off the 7. The gap between the 6&9 gives the 6 just enough time to clear. The ideal CB direction will depend on the gap size and other gaps in the rack; but in general, try shooting from the “box” along a line between the 1st and 2nd diamonds on the head rail, as shown.

from "Video Encyclopedia of Nine-ball and Ten-ball" (VENT)



[Image 5](#) Gap-behind-the-9 golden break

I hope you enjoyed my summary of the various techniques for getting a “golden break.” Hopefully, they will let you get “lucky” more often against less-knowledgeable opponents.

Good luck with your game from Dr. Dave.



[NV J.74](#) – Best Pool BREAK SHOTS of All Time in 9-ball, 10-ball, and 8-ball

[NV L.5](#) – How to Make the 9 ON THE BREAK ... It's Not Just Luck

PS:

- I know other authors and I tend to use lots of terminology, and I know not all readers are totally familiar with these terms. If you ever come across a word or phrase you do not fully understand, please refer to the [online glossary](#) at [billiards.colostate.edu](#).

Dr. Dave is a PBI Master Instructor, Dean of the Billiard University, and author of the book: [The Illustrated Principles of Pool and Billiards](#) and numerous instructional DVD series, all available at: [DrDaveBilliards.com](#).