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

In a recent online video (**NV L.103**), I discussed and analyzed three recent questionable foul calls in pro tournament matches involving draw-shot-miscue scoop shots (see **Image 1**). The most recent was a shot by Patric Gonzales against Jayson Shaw in the 2025 Philippines Open. In the video, and in this column, I explore miscue and scoop shots in detail and make it totally clear when they are legal or not.

Image 1 Recent scoop shots in pro tournament matches

Before continuing, you really should first watch the video so you can see and hear the three shots in question, especially the Gonzales shot, which is the focus on the analysis. Each shot was called a foul. When you watch the video, try to judge whether you would call a foul or not if you were the referee. The referees obviously had better views of the shots live, but use your best judgment.

A **miscue** is a bad hit resulting from trying to hit too far out on the cue ball (CB) to apply significant spin. A **scoop shot** is a bad hit with an attempted draw or backspin shot, where the CB is launched into the air. With miscues, secondary contact with the CB often occurs with the tip or side of the cue after the initial hit (see the left side of **Image 2**). Secondary contact can also occur with some scoop shots (see the right side of Image 2).

Image 2 Secondary contact with miscue and scoop shots

Below is the WPA official rule of pool covering how fouls should be called concerning miscues and scoops.

> ***2.11 MISCUE***
>
> *A miscue occurs when the cue tip slides off the cue-ball possibly due to a contact that is too eccentric or due to insufficient chalk on the tip. It is usually accompanied by a sharp sound and evidenced by a discoloration of the tip. Although some miscues involve contact of the side of the cue-stick with the cue-ball, unless such contact is clearly visible, it is assumed not to have occurred. A scoop shot, in which the cue tip contacts the playing surface and the cue-ball at the same time, and this causes the cue-ball to rise off the cloth, is treated like a miscue. If an unintentional miscue causes the cue-ball to leave the playing surface, including partially or fully jumping over a ball, it is treated like a legal jump shot. Note that intentional miscues are covered by 3.16 Unsportsmanlike Conduct (c).*

A miscue should not be called a foul unless there is clear visual evidence indicating contact with the side of the cue. If the evidence is not clear, the benefit of the doubt always goes to the shooter, with no foul called. The shot could also be called a foul if the miscue is intentional to achieve some advantage for the player. Several examples of this are demonstrated in the video.

A scoop shot is treated just like a miscue, and the jumping action of the CB is not penalized. Again, a foul can be called only if the scoop is intentional, to achieve some advantage, or if there is clear visual evidence of contact with the side of the cue. Obviously, for the referees to call the scoop shots in question a foul, they must have thought they saw the side of the cue contact the CB during the shot.

The online video includes many examples of both miscue and scoop shots. With many of the shots, you might think the sound indicates the CB is slapped by the side of the cue; but as the video clearly demonstrates, sound is not a reliable indicator of a foul. And even with slowed-down video replay of normal camera footage, it is impossible to detect whether there is secondary contact with the tip or side of the cue during miscue and scoop shots. The framerate of typical video cameras is not nearly fast enough to capture the action of the hit. The only type of miscue where secondary contact with the side of the cue is obvious is with a topspin miscue foul where the CB gets trapped under the cue after the shot, as demonstrated in the video.

Just as with miscue shots, scoop shots can also sound funny, but the reason for this is not because the side of the cue is smacking the CB. It is because there is a lot of force on the tip as it slams to the table and launches the CB into the air. Whether the tip hits the CB first and sides down the CB until it reaches the table, or the tip hits the CB and table at the same time, or the tip hits the table first and slides into the CB, the tip eventually wedges between the CB and table (see **Image 3**) and launches the CB up with lots of force (and

sound). As demonstrated by numerous examples in the video with different cue tip contact points and cue elevations, filmed with super-slow-motion video, the side of the cue never contacts the CB during typical scoop shots. It is the tip and not the side of the cue that launches the CB into the air.

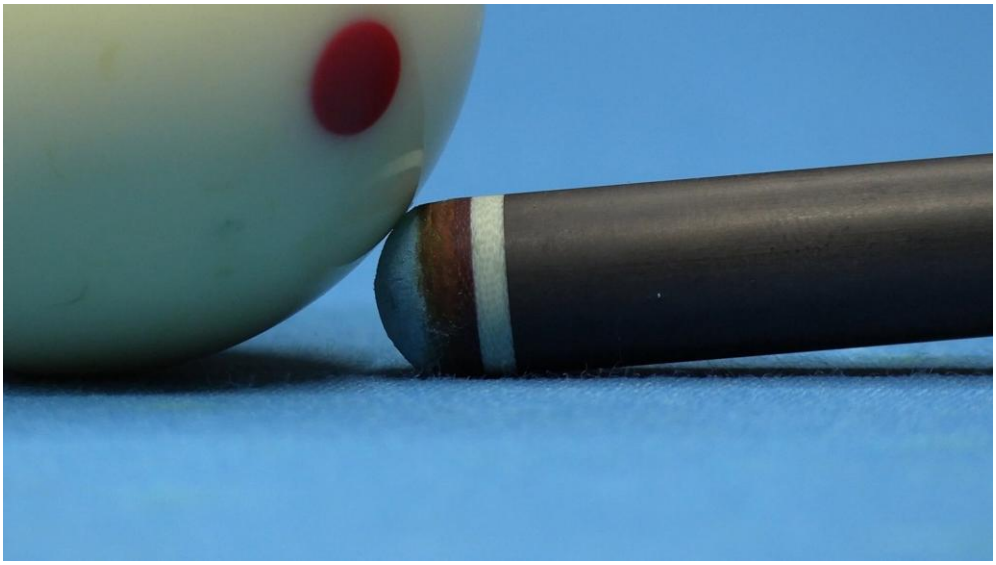

Image 3 Scoop shot tip contact

In an earlier online video (**NV L.101**) featuring the Gonzales' shot and drama surrounding it, many people commented on social media that they thought the CB was launched into the air by the side of the cue since the cue rose up quite a bit during the follow through. In response to that, I tried to recreate and mimic the cue-lift action of the Gonzales shot in my most recent video (**NV L.103**). I filmed the shot both with a regular video camera and in slow motion with a high-speed camera, both with clear side views of the shot, and I attempted to really exaggerate the cue-lift action as much as possible. Even with this recreated shot with cue lift, it was very clear that there was no contact with the side of the cue during the shot. Again, it is the table-supported tip that launches the CB into the air, not the side of the cue.

In the new video, I also show camera footage that the referee had access to during video review. Obviously, the referee must have thought the side of the cue hit the CB, but my review of the footage showed that there was no clear evidence of this. Again, a normal video camera is not fast enough to capture everything that happens during the hit. The available frames from the match video just before, during, and after the hit are shown in **Image 4**. In the first frame, the tip is close to hitting the CB. In the very next frame, the hit has already occurred, with the CB already separated from the tip (although it is tough to tell from this view). And in the very next frame, the CB is higher and the CB has clearly separated from the tip. And in the very next frame, the CB is long gone as the cue is continuing to rise. I admit that when watching this shot live, it might seem like the side of the shaft could be launching the CB into the air. And when the video frames are played at regular speed, our brains blur or fill in the details between the frames and we might see what we want to see based on certain beliefs. But there is certainly no clear visual evidence of a foul in this video. And remember, the benefit of the any doubt always goes to the shooter.

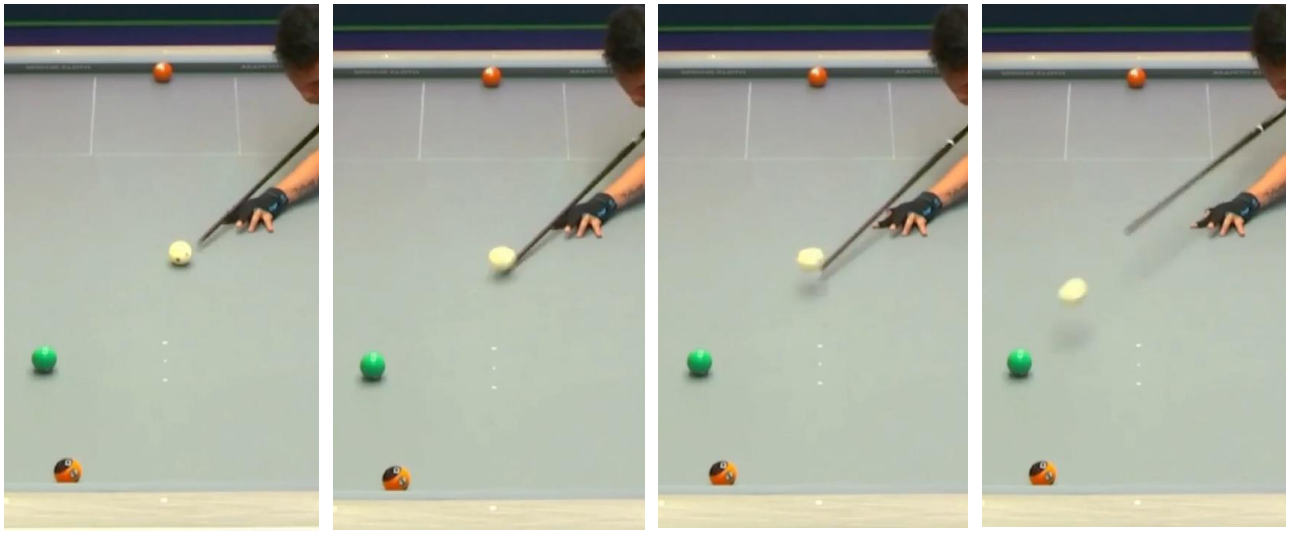

Image 4 Gonzales scoop shot

Again, be sure to watch online video **NV L.103** so you can judge for yourself; but based on the video evidence available and on the analysis and examples in the video, I believe fouls should not have been called on any of the three shots. Referees are not perfect and they do make mistakes on occasion. Hopefully, videos and columns like this will help everybody learn from these mistakes in the hope they occur less frequently in the future.

Good luck with your game,
Dr. Dave

normal video

NV L.101 – Controversial Non-Call of WRONG-BALL-HIT-FIRST FOUL
NV L.103 – When are MISCUE and SCOOP Shots Fouls?

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 ***drdavepoolinfo.com***.

Dr. Dave is a PBIA 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***.