



The Care of Billiard, Snooker and Pool Tables

1. The Nap on the bed-cloth of a Billiard Table runs from the baulk end to the spot end. On the cushions the direction of the nap varies according to the make of the table. The cloth is stretched tightly over the table when first fitted, but its natural characteristics allow it to stretch and in time it will become slack. When this happens it requires re-stretching by a skilled billiards fitter.
2. Regular cleaning, brushing and ironing in the direction of the nap are essential to the maintenance of the table's efficiency.
 - a) Brush the table in the direction of the nap to remove all dirt. Remember to brush under and around cushions in the direction of the nap **only**.
 - b) Go over the table again with a cloth or towel wrapped around the brush.
 - c) Iron after each brushing to lay the nap. Make sure that the iron is at once quite clean and not too hot; medium heat – No.6 on a thermostatic billiard iron. An iron which is too hot dries the wool fibres, makes them brittle and the cloth more susceptible to wear. Angle the iron at 45° to reduce heat marks, and keep it moving. Iron the bed-cloth only; never the cushions.

When a new cloth has been in use a short time small spots will appear. These are often suspected as “moth marks”. In fact, they are “cue stabs”, caused by players allowing their cues to come into contact with the cloth after striking the ball; an especially common fault- often unsuspected- when the ball is struck below mid-centre.

When the cue tip is thus brought into sharp contact with the cloth, tightly stretched on its unyielding slate bed, a little of the nap is removed and the “moth mark” results. These marks will gradually become less noticeable as the cloth ages. This type of damage is caused all the more frequently if the edges of tips do not exactly fit the cue, it is therefore important to make sure that your cue tips and ferrules are kept in good condition. The dropping of balls, or rough placing of rests and triangles can cause similar blemishes; as also can the tossing of coins which should be totally forbidden, as it can cut the cloth.

Occasionally a newly covered table will be seen to have a line running across it, either lighter or darker than the rest of the cloth. This is a press or fold mark, indicating where the cloth was folded. With regular brushing and ironing this will gradually become less noticeable and will ultimately disappear.

Cushions require no other maintenance than regular brushing- again with the run of the nap.

A word of warning about cushion speed

For reasons too technical to explain here, it should be stressed that no manufacturer can guarantee that a new set of cushions will give a specified degree of speed. Nor is it necessary for players to concern themselves with the number of lengths a ball will run “when hit with maximum force”. To judge a table by this test is like trying to measure the ‘pick up’ of a cricket bat or the “balance” of a racket by the use of scales and foot-rule. The only speed essential to good play is that there should be sufficient resilience in the cushions for a cue ball to travel easily around the table when a normal stroke is played.

A few other tips

- 1) Keep the table as clean as possible by covering it with a dust cover whilst not in use.
- 2) Keep hands clean!
- 3) Balls should be free from chips and regularly cleaned using a recommended cleaning fluid.
- 4) Always use spots to protect the cloth under the coloured ball positions. Always replace damaged spots.
- 5) Always remove balls from the pockets at the end of play.
- 6) Keep cue tips in good order.