

HOW TO PLAY
BILLIARDS

BY WALTER LINDRUM



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A LECTURETTE

By Walter Lindrum.

CORRECT STANCE.

THE bedrock of billiards is correct stance and correct delivery of the cue. I shall take stance first.

It is obvious that if a player takes up an uncomfortable attitude at the table he cannot do himself justice, though he might have what may be called a "natural aptitude for the game," and that means a good eye for angles. "A good eye for angles" really means everything so far as the directing of the balls is concerned, and it applies to every sort of winning and losing hazard, as well as to cannons. In a straight pot there is no angle to be considered; in an all-round cannon, played, possibly, off five cushions, the problem of angles is complex. This straight pot and the many-angled cannon may be taken, therefore, as the two extremes of directing the balls. This brings us to stance. Both in the pot and the cannon, success will depend (among other things) on the body being balanced correctly, for, without correct balance, accuracy in striking the cue ball so that it will make the desired contact with the object ball is impos-

sible or, at any rate, it is very difficult to attain.

There is no difficulty about acquiring a correct way of standing at the table ("stance"). The correct way, indeed, is the easiest way. I do not insist on exact measurements. No two professionals keep their feet at exactly the same distance apart, for example. But there is one general rule. The knee nearest to the table should be slightly bent, and that furthest away from it should be kept rigidly straight. This rule applies to all ordinary shots. Of course, where the player finds it difficult to "get at" the object ball, the rule may not hold good; but I am dealing with the rule, not with the exception.

CUE DELIVERY.

Anyone, as I have said, should find it easy to acquire a correct attitude in standing at the table, but, as regards correct cue delivery, this is not so easy. The beginner has always a tendency to grip the cue "in his fist"—that is, he brings the thumb and all four fingers to bear tightly on the butt. This is all wrong. The ideal to attain is what has sometimes been termed the "piston-rod" delivery. The cue is delivered perfectly straight; there is neither any up-and-down nor any side-to-side movement. This is impossible to attain if the cue is grasped in the way indicated. It must be held very lightly. Stevenson, a great cueist, holds his cue between the thumb and first finger only; the late John Roberts, another great cueist, made a sort of loop with the first second and third fingers, and also the thumb. Both methods are correct, for both permit a

perfectly straight delivery. I find that holding the cue between the first finger and the thumb and letting the second finger just touch the butt (without "holding" it) the most satisfactory way to cue. The loose hold is what is to be aimed for, however it is attained. If any beginner doubts this, let him grip his cue and deliver slowly and watch the point of his cue. If he does so he will see that the cue will inevitably tend to rise as the delivery proceeds, and also that there will be a tendency for the path of the cue to curve sideways. This is due to the rigidity of the muscles caused by the tight grip on the butt. Another important point of delivery is to play with a loose wrist, for if the wrist joint is not allowed to work easily, this will tend to throw the cue out of line. Hold the cue about 12 inches from the end of the butt for ordinary shots, but for all forcing shots hold it nearly at the end of the butt.

HOW TO STRIKE THE BALL.

We will assume that these instructions have been mastered, and will now consider the actual striking of the ball. Here, again, the beginner will find that correct striking does not come by nature. His tendency is to "stab" the ball—that is, to hit it and, at the very moment of delivery, to stop the cue short. This, too, is all wrong. The stopping of the cue, with a "sudden application of the brakes," so to speak, is certain to cause it to deflect from the straight path, either sideways or up and down. When this happens the ball will either be hit too high or too low, or else to the right or to the left of the centre line. The

secret of striking the ball correctly is to let the cue "go through it," as they say. In other words, let the swing of the cue finish naturally, as though there were no cue ball on the table.

What has been said about gripping the cue and letting the cue go through the ball is the rule for all plain shots. But every rule has its exception. In playing screw shots the cue should be pinched rather tightly between the thumb and the first finger at the very moment (not before) it makes contact with the cue ball, and at the same time its motion should be suddenly brought to a full stop. This takes long practice, and it depends to some extent on natural "touch." If the player desires to attain real proficiency at screwing, this "nipping" delivery must be acquired, for it imparts "ginger" to a screw that is impossible where there is any "follow-through" of the cue after the cue ball has been struck. One word more in regard to screws. Let the weight of the cue do the work; do not "stab" the cue ball. It is helpful to practise screws with two balls only at first, without trying to score; then you can concentrate on correct screw delivery.

THE BRIDGE.

The bridge hand should rest easily on the table with the weight equally distributed over it. Some players prefer to turn the hand over slightly so as to bring the weight on the ball of the thumb. I do not like this method, for I find it uncomfortable. It will be seen from the illustration that I keep my fingers close together. Some professionals prefer to spread the fingers apart with the idea of getting a

firmer bridge. I do not think there is anything to be gained by this position of the fingers, and I have the same objection to it as I have to turning the hand over so as to bring

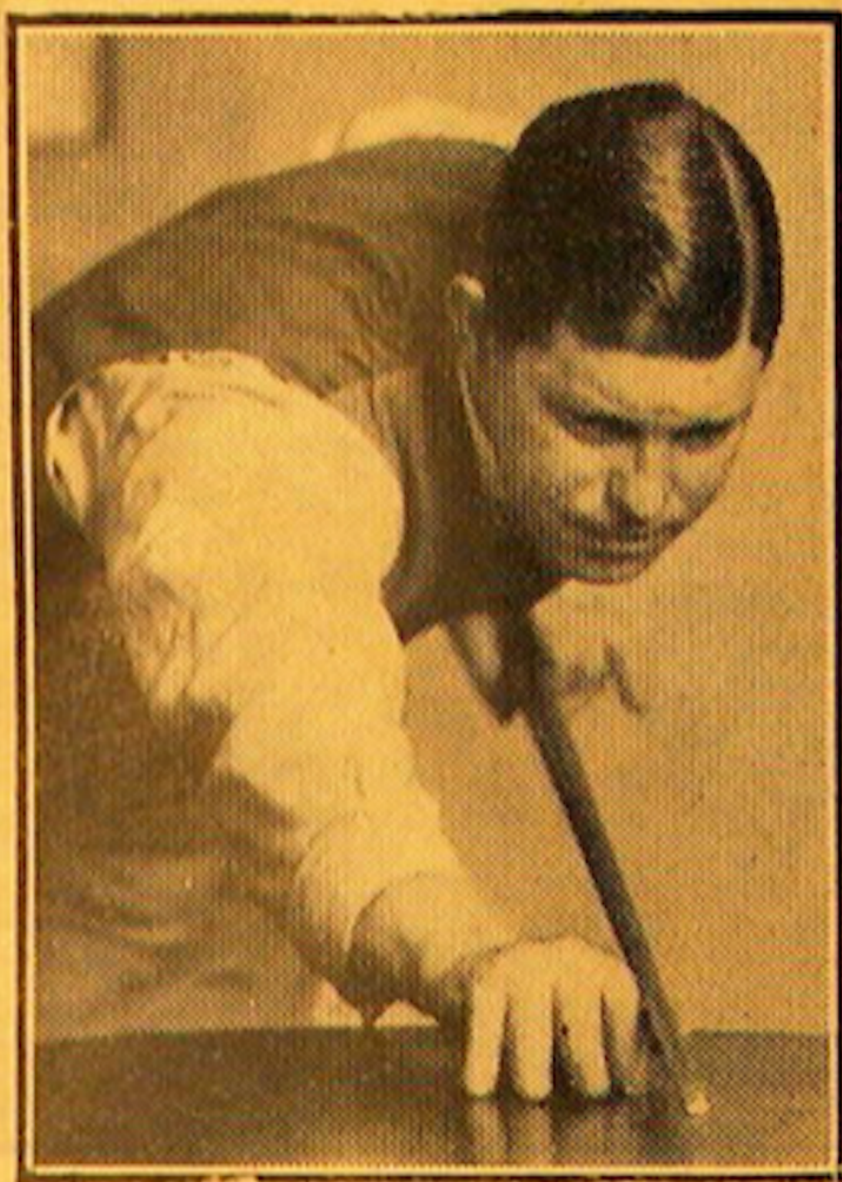


By Courtesy of the Proprietors of "The Argus" and
"The Australasian"

WORST POSSIBLE BRIDGE

the weight on the ball of the thumb, for to me, at any rate, it is not a comfortable bridge. There is one point that must never be lost sight of in making a bridge, and that is the

pressing of the thumb firmly against either the knuckle of the first finger or else against the first joint of this finger. No one who plays with a wide bridge—that is with the thumb



By Courtesy of the Proprietors of "The Argus"
and "The Australasian"

THE BRIDGE I USE

held at nearly right angles to the hand—can ever expect to become really proficient. If he is in perfect form he may do fairly well in spite of this faulty bridge, but if he is the

least bit out of form his cue will "wobble" and he will not be able to strike the cue ball truly. For plain shots the bridge hand should be somewhere between 9in. and 12in. from the



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ANOTHER FORM OF BRIDGE

cue ball. The shorter distance is preferable for screws, stuns, and winning hazards; and the longer one for losers, especially for forcing losers,, and also for all-round cannons. In

regard to the position of the bridge hand, there is one point which is very important, though it is frequently neglected, and that is in a case where a player, after placing the bridge hand on the table with the intention of striking his ball truly on the centre line, afterwards decides that he will put side on the ball. Instead of shifting his hand, as he should do, he twists the cue round a little in order to strike the ball on the side. This is a bad fault, for it is apt to result in a mis-cue and, at the same time, it makes it difficult to get the desired contact with the object ball.

ONE BALL PRACTICE.

Many players have never practised with one ball—indeed, possibly this applies to the majority of amateurs. It cannot be too much emphasised that a player who neglects one ball practice is greatly handicapping himself. His delivery will not be as good as it should be, and it is certain that he cannot depend on hitting his ball on the centre line. This applies particularly to forcing shots. Now, if side is put on the cue ball, it does not travel in a straight path, but swerves; and, of course, when it strikes the object ball, the side it carries makes it "come-off" at an unexpected angle. The player does not notice the swerve from where he is standing, and he does not know that he has put any side on his ball. He cannot understand, therefore, why he misses the shot (we will suppose it is a forcing loser), and he thinks he must be "spotting" wrong. He spots for a wider or a narrower angle therefore, as the case may be, very probably to discover that instead of correcting the error

he has only made it worse. If he had gone in for one-ball practice this would never have happened, for hitting his ball truly in the centre would have come so natural to him that he would never accidentally hit it on the side. One-ball practice is the greatest possible aid to a flowing, straight delivery, for the player, not having to worry about scoring, is able to concentrate on delivery and on striking his ball exactly in the centre or on one side or the other if he wishes to give it side. In other words, he acquires the art of striking his ball just where he wants to, and that means that he has laid a solid foundation on which to build up his billiards.

It must not be thought one-ball play is for the novice only. No matter what stage of proficiency a player has reached, he cannot afford to neglect one-ball play; and, in saying this, I practise what I preach.

To practise one-ball playing, place the ball exactly in the centre of the baulk-line (that is mid-way between the right and left hand spot of the "D") and drive it up the table over the centre and the billiard spots. If it has been struck dead true it will travel along this line exactly when coming off the top cushion. The player should begin by playing with just sufficient strength to bring the ball back into baulk. He may then gradually increase the strength, and he will find that the greater the strength he uses the harder it will be to strike dead on the centre. When the player can bring the ball back perfectly straight with a real "forcer," he knows that he has conquered the difficult art of hitting his ball truly. But,

as I have said before, he must not neglect one-ball practice on this account, for if he does he is likely to lose his power of accuracy of striking and of freedom of delivery.

One-ball practice need not be confined to playing straight up and down the table. When the player has become proficient at this, he can practise angle play. Let him make a chalk mark anywhere out of baulk on one of the cushions and play from a fixed position. This will teach him angles, and it will show him if he is striking his ball truly. If he is, it will always come back in the same way, providing he keeps to one strength. If he plays with great strength, however, the ball will "bury" in the cushion, and this will affect the angle at which it will return.

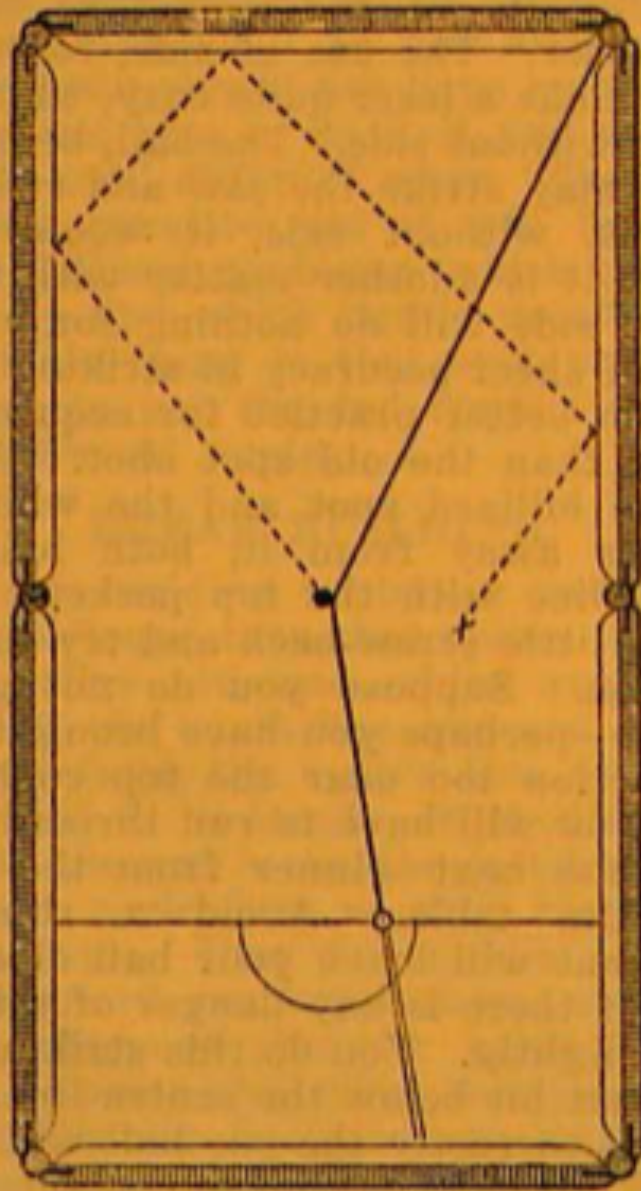
THE MIDDLE POCKET LOSER.

This is the first shot that the beginner should practise. It will teach him strength, and, if he practises it properly, it will enable him to control both the direction of his own ball and that of the object ball. The diagram shows the way to make this most useful shot. The main thing is to cause it to travel close to the centre line of the table and to come from 12 inches to 18 inches below the centre spot so as to leave another hazard. If it comes back too far then play a thin, slow shot into the centre pocket so as to get the red into position for another middle pocket loser. If it does not come back far enough, then play a long loser (see diagram). It should be added that the position shown in the middle pocket diagram is not an ideal one; it just represents a "leave" where the middle pocket is "on."

The player must bring the ball back nearer the centre line.

THE LONG LOSER.

The long loser is decidedly harder than the middle pocket loser, because the shot has to be made with considerable strength to bring the ball back into scoring position. To get the shot itself is comparatively easy, but the player must make up his mind that he will get position as well as the shot. Here is a point which should be carefully noted. The standard long loser is a "half-ball" shot, but it better to play what is called a "thick" half-ball. This brings the red back into position with a minimum of strength, and the thick contact slows-up the cue ball, which makes it easier to get the pocket. There is a curious thing about these thick contacts which may be interesting to note. If the contact is a little on the thick side, the angle the cue ball will throw will be to all intents and purposes exactly the same angle as it would be if the contact had been an exact half-ball. But it is a very different thing if the contact is even a fraction too narrow, for when this happens the path of the ball will be changed by some inches, it may be, and it will not find the pocket.



THE LONG LOSER :
Position Got Middle Pocket.

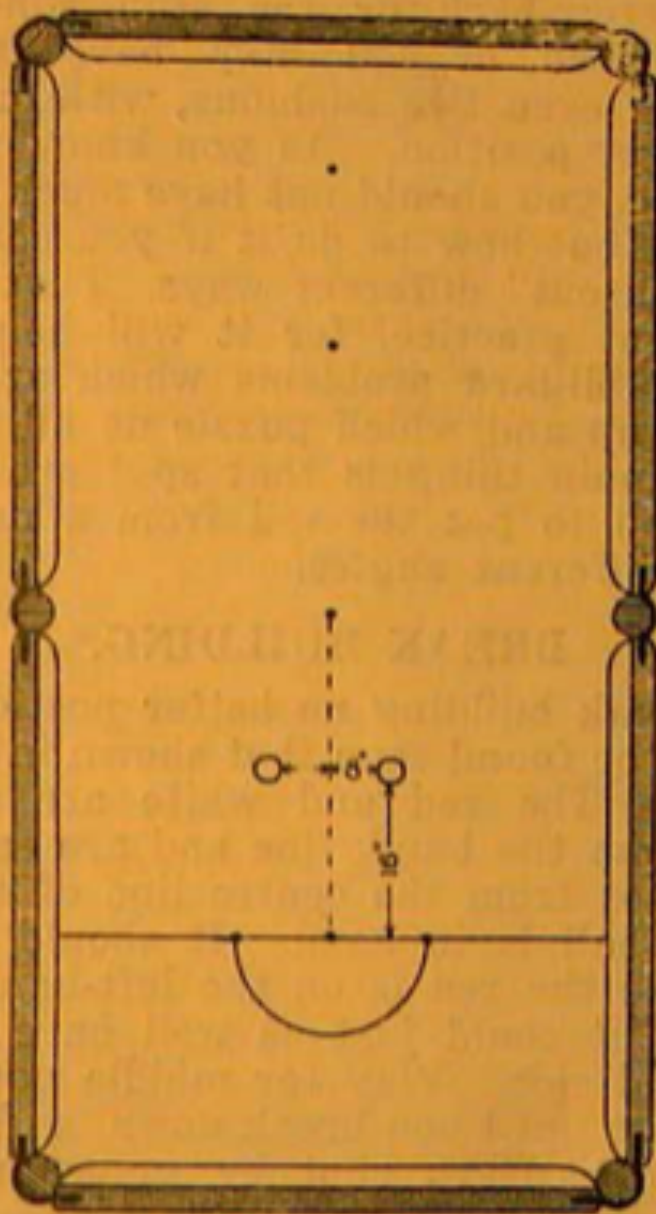
THE WINNING HAZARD.

The weak spot in the billiards of the average amateur is undoubtedly his winning hazard play. This is accounted for in part by the greater difficulty of the winner as compared with the loser. The use of side, for example, will often make a loser quite easy, which might be difficult without side. The ball, being loaded with side, may strike the jaw and twist in off it, whereas, without side, it would rebound back. But it is another matter with the winner. Here side will do nothing for you; it is a matter of sheer accuracy in striking the ball. There is no better practice for acquiring skill at potting than the old spot shot. Place the red on the billiard spot and the white about four inches away from it, both balls being exactly in line with the top pocket. Pot the red with a little screw-back and try to recover the position. Suppose you do not get back quite right—perhaps you have brought the cue ball a fraction too near the top cushion. In that case you will have to run through the red and play the next winner from the opposite side of the table. Avoid a run-through strength that will leave your ball close to the cushion. If there is any danger of this "stun" your ball slightly. You do this striking crisply and the least bit below the centre line. If this is managed correctly the cue ball will travel a few inches after it has made contact with the red and will leave position. There are a good many different ways of getting position for the spot. It would be quite possible, indeed, to write a long article on this pretty shot, which should never have been barred, though it might have been limited.

I can only say this here. The object is to get such a position that both balls are in line, or nearly in line. You may have to make the simple screw-back or the stun run-through, just described, or you may have to use a cushion or even two cushions, with or without side, to get position. As you know what has to be done, you should not have much difficulty in finding out how to do it if you concentrate by "trying-out" different ways. That in itself is excellent practice, for it will help you to solve the billiard problems which are always cropping up and which puzzle us all at times. But the main thing is that spot practice will enable you to pot the red from a number of slightly different angles.

BREAK BUILDING.

For break building no better position of the balls can be found than that shown in the third diagram. The red and white are about 16 inches from the baulk line and are each about four inches from the centre line of the table. The cue ball is in hand. It should be noted that while the red is on the left-hand side of the table it could just as well have been the right-hand side. Play for middle pockets and long losers until you break down, and then try to get a recovery shot by going in off the white or by using the white to make a cannon. Always make the first shot to bring the ball back somewhere mid-way between the baulk line and the centre spot. Make a note of your breaks and a note also of what sort of a shot you failed at. If these instructions are carefully followed you cannot fail to improve, for you are really building a break and not making



BREAK BUILDING POSITION :
 Player is in hand; Red is on the
 left hand side, with white held in
 reserve.

a lot of disconnected shots. You will learn more in an hour's practice in break building than you will in a week by just knocking the balls about on the table.

THINGS TO REMEMBER WHEN YOU PLAY YOUR TOURNAMENT GAMES.

- 1.—Always see your tip is in good order before commencement; touch it up with a file, and never use sandpaper.
- 2.—Never mind if the balls don't run your way early in the game; they are bound to come your way later, and you may pull an apparently lost game out of the fire.
- 3.—Don't be in a hurry to play the opening stroke of your break when you're opponent breaks down. Sitting down makes a player a bit over anxious, and if you go to the table too quickly you break down before you realise it and your opponent, warmed up, goes on for another nice break.
- 4.—In the course of a game, after each forty or fifty points, take the cue ball and rub it up and down your shirt sleeve. This keeps your ball nice and dry, prevents mis-cues, avoids kicking, and makes the angle come off much truer.
- 5.—At the commencement of a game players should string for break instead of tossing. Having a shot firing up the table helps to put you in good touch for the game to follow.
- 6.—See you have a nice dry piece of chalk in your pocket. Don't let the hole in the chalk get too deep, as it will pull the tip off and won't chalk the centre part of the tip.

- 7.—Always play with your own cue; playing with different cues will never improve a player's game. If you always use the one cue it will make you play most shots with the strength you mean to hit the ball, and you drill the correct touch into the cue arm through always using your own cue.
- 8.—Never blame the tip when you mis-cue; it is probably caused by faulty delivery or a greasy ball.

LINDRUM USES BONZOLINE.

Walter Lindrum in all his matches uses Bonzoline balls, and expresses the opinion that they are the finest composition ball made. Walter Lindrum plays under the auspices of Messrs. Alcock & Co., the famous billiard manufacturers.

BUYING A TABLE.

IT is a fact known perhaps only to experts that the good points of a billiard table are far more hidden than obvious and, although appreciated by a good player when a game is in progress, yet it takes an expert to distinguish them when the purchase of a table is under consideration. A cheap table generally looks as good as the best, except perhaps that its legs may be slimmer, and, with a trial by almost any player, bar an expert, it may perhaps satisfy them. It may look a great investment at the price, but when sent home the trouble probably begins. Cushion trouble will develop, balls jump and run hard and dead at certain angles, the cloth wears quickly, it becomes coarse and scrubby, and then the table becomes untrue. When these defects commence the table becomes expensive to keep in

repair, and is seldom, if ever, fit for a pleasant game of billiards.

The only way to avoid this is to purchase a table at a fair price, made by a reputable firm (and from themselves direct if possible), which has a reputation to maintain. If the purchase of a secondhand table is under consideration, it is even more essential to see that the make of table is right and that the cushions have not been patched up temporarily to ensure a sale. The initial extra cost saves money in the long run; but, quite apart from this, what really matters is the difference between pleasure on a good table and annoyance on a bad one; it becomes not a game of skill, but haphazard luck. Every part of a billiard table carries with it the impress of its origin; unseasoned wood, inferior slates, coarse cloths, and inferior cushions all go to the making of a cheap billiard table. The average man cannot detect these things at first sight, and ofttimes has to buy his experience dearly. My advice is, when you want to buy a billiard table, go to a firm of undoubted reputation.

FREE BILLIARD LESSON.

In exhibition games of one session, I have made a new departure that I have every reason to think will be appreciated by the public. I intend that such games shall be combined with what will really be a free lesson for the spectators. Sometimes I explain shots before I make them, if I think that the spectators may be puzzled as to why I play a particular shot in a particular way. I also invite any spectator to ask questions at the end of the game

concerning anything he has seen during the play that he is not quite clear about. Or, if anybody asks me to make a particular shot, I will try to do so providing, of course, it is "on." These exhibitions will be divided into three parts:—(a) the play itself, (b) explaining shots on the table and answering any questions that may be asked, and (c) giving an exhibition of fancy shots.

I have selected the following shots as likely to be interesting:—

- 1.—Cannon twice around table.
- 2.—Cannon around angle.
- 3.—Kiss cannon around table.
- 4.—Double baulk cannon.
- 5.—Double baulk cannon.
- 6.—Cannon around angle.
- 7.—Cannon after striking every cushion.
- 8.—In off red without touching red.
- 9.—Eight shot (one way).
- 10.—Eight shot (another way).
- 11.—Ten shot.
- 12.—Cannon straight along top cushion.
- 13.—Kiss cannon up the table.
- 14.—Cannon while all balls are in motion.
- 15.—Switch-back cannon.
- 16.—Cannon off jaw along cushion.
- 17.—Cannon in the hat.
- 18.—Fire penny in top pocket.
- 19.—Hit the last ball first.
- 20.—Fire through, come back, and cannon.
- 21.—Cannon on every colored ball.
- 22.—Stand the basket on its right end and cannon.
- 23.—Novel way of making a six shot.
- 24.—Fire white in basket and knock red out.

25.—Ditto.

26.—Masse shot.

27.—Ditto.

Private lesson given and exhibitions given at private homes, clubs and billiard saloons.

Walter Lindrum is only too pleased to give advice as regards the improvement of billiard tables, cues, balls, or any other matter in connection with billiards.

All tours arranged under the auspices of Alcock and Co. Pty. Ltd.

WALTER LINDRUM'S RECORDS

Amongst Walter Lindrum's record breaks are the following:—

1879 against C. Falkiner, Town Hall, Perth, Oct., 1925 (world's record).

1417 against N. Stevenson, Sydney, May, 1922.

1272 against C. Falkiner, Adelaide, Sept., 1924.

1237 against T. Thompson, Perth, Dec., 1922.

1219 against C. Falkiner, Sydney, July, 1924.

1005 against C. Falkiner, Adelaide, Sept., 1924.

Walter Lindrum, playing against Falkiner, Adelaide, Sept., 1924, made two breaks of over 1000 in one week—1272 and 1005. World's record.

Walter Lindrum is the only player who has made a thousand break at all-round and red ball billiards.

Walter Lindrum holds the record breaks; fastest break ever made, 636 in 16 minutes.

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Copyright Act 1912.

APPLICATION FOR REGISTRATION OF COPYRIGHT IN A PUBLISHED ORIGINAL
LITERARY, DRAMATIC, MUSICAL, OR ARTISTIC WORK.

(By the Author or Authors, or his or their Assignee, Agent, or Attorney.)

I, ⁽¹⁾ Walter Lindrum
WE,
of ⁽²⁾ 317 Flinders Lane
Melbourne⁽³⁾ _____ hereby make application for the registration
of the Copyright in a ⁽⁴⁾ literary work being a ⁽⁵⁾ booklet
entitled ⁽⁶⁾ "How to Play Billiard" by
Walter LindrumHPS
I WE do hereby declare that the said ⁽⁴⁾ literary work was
first published in (*a part of His Majesty's Dominions to which the Act
extends ~~or a foreign country to which an Order in Council under the Act~~
relates) by myself at Melbourne
aforesaidon the 21st December 1926 and that such date was not later than
fourteen days (or such further time as is fixed by law) after the date of its
first publication elsewhere.I WE do further declare that ⁽⁷⁾ Walter Lindrum of
317 Flinders Lane Melbourne
the author of the said ⁽⁴⁾ literary work, and that ~~WE~~ I am the
owner of the Copyright therein.And WE make this declaration conscientiously believing the statements

contained therein to be true in every particular.

Declared at Melbourne this 6th day of February 1927
⁽⁸⁾ Walter Lindrumbefore me ⁽⁹⁾ Herbert H. Smith JP
To the Registrar of Copyrights,
Commonwealth of Australia.

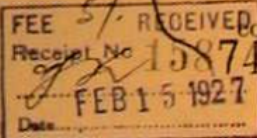
- (1). Name of Applicant (in full).
 (2). Address.
 (3). Occupation.
 (4). State whether "Literary," "Dramatic," or
 "Musical," or "Artistic" Work, as the case may be.
 (5). State whether "Book," "Drama," "Song,"
 "Painting," "Work of Sculpture," "Lecture," &c., as
 the case may be.
 (6). Title of Work (in full) or description sufficient
 to identify it.

(7). State the name and address of the Author
 of the work, or the words "I am," or "we are," as the
 case requires.

(8). Signature of Applicant.
 (9). Signature of Person before whom the Declara-
 tion is made.

NOTE.—Where the Applicant is the Assignee from
 the Author, the Applicant must forward with his appli-
 cation each assignment or instrument by virtue of which
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* Strike out whichever is not needed.



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Form G.

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Copyright Act 1912.

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SIR,

I hereby authorize and request you to send all notices, requisitions, and communications in connexion with my application

for the registration of the Copyright in my⁽¹⁾ *literary work*

entitled⁽²⁾ *"How to Play Billiard"*

to⁽³⁾ *me at 317 Flinders Lane Melbourne*

Dated this *4th* day of *February* A.D. 192*5*

X Walter Lindrum X

To the Registrar of Copyrights,

Commonwealth of Australia.

NOTE.—A particular address must be given. An address such as "General Post Office, Melbourne," will not be accepted.

(1) Here insert "Literary," "Dramatic," "Musical," "Artistic" Work, or "Mechanical Musical Contrivance," as the case requires.

(2) Title of work.

(3) Here insert name and full address.

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