

# ...Is the Determining Factor

"Either you tried to make a specific ball in a specific pocket (intent) or you did anything else.

It doesn't matter what you call it - the anything else gets marked as defense."

In the perfect world of pool, all players would call their opponents' attention to defensive shots, even before shooting them. Unfortunately, in the real world of pool, that doesn't always happen. When keeping score, be sure to mark a defensive shot if you believe your teammate or his opponent did not intend to pocket a ball. Remember that it is not necessary for the scoresheets of both teams to agree on the number of defensive shots.

Some players misunderstand what constitutes a defensive shot (also called a safety). A defensive shot occurs when there is no intent to pocket a ball.

*Intent* is the key word, and certainly leaves room for judgement. In order to protect the integrity of **The Equalizer**® handicap system, it's important for Team Captains and higher-skilled players to educate lower-skilled players on what a defensive shot is. To help understand what constitutes a defensive shot, let's review some examples, keeping in mind that *intent* is the determining factor:

## Example 1:

A player is left "hooked" and unable to shoot directly at one of his object balls. He "kicks" at a ball sitting midway between the side and corner pockets, almost touching the rail. He hits the object ball just hard enough for it to contact the rail, making a legal hit and not giving up ball-in-hand. *Was there an intent to make a ball? No. A defensive shot should have been marked. (If the player had hit the object ball at least hard enough to drive it away from the rail, it would then be a judgement call on his intent.)*

## Example 2:

A player does not have a "makeable" or "high

percentage" shot and decides to leave his opponent in a difficult situation, rather than attempt a difficult shot. He shoots one of his object balls softly to the rail and makes the cue ball roll in behind his object ball, leaving his opponent with no shot -- or a difficult one at best. *This is the most obvious defensive shot.*

## Example 3:

A player is well ahead in a game or match and decides to purposely miss a few shots. This is unethical and a form of cheating, better known as sandbagging, that could disqualify a player or team in Local League play or at an APA National Tournament. The way to prevent sandbagging is to **mark a defensive shot when you believe there was no intent by the player to make a ball.** This is obviously a judgement call. If every scorekeeper marked defensive shots when they believed sandbagging was taking place, it would be pointless for players to attempt sandbagging. In order for sandbagging to occur, BOTH teams must fail to follow the rules. The shooter must deliberately cheat, and his/her team and the opponent's team must fail to mark the deliberate misses as defensive shots. It is hard to design a system more secure than one that requires deliberate cheating by one team and the negligence of the other team in order for sandbagging to occur. *If it is the scorekeeper's opinion that a player did not **intend** to pocket a ball, a defensive shot should be marked.*

We need your help to protect the integrity of **The Equalizer**® handicap system. Please display good sportsmanship by announcing your defensive shots and help others to recognize them. Your passion to win should never be compromised by sandbagging!

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