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Pool Cue Power: What Is It And What Can It Do For You?

By Bob Meucci

Over the years there has been much conjecture over the importance of cue power for breaking balls

or applying english, etc.. Some players have thought that a heavy cue would make them break better. Thank goodness, most players have finally been educated to the reality that a lighter cue is more powerful. A fact that has been repeatedly proven by the Meucci Staff and other players in breaking contests over the years – ever since I first introduced the use of a radar gun at tournaments in the early 90's. The simple fact is that a human, male or female, has limited strength and can only move a certain amount of weight so fast; the heavier the weight, the slower the swing. Conversely, the lighter the weight, the faster the swing.

It is the speed of the cue, not its mass (weight), that causes the acceleration of the cue ball because of the cue's compression at the moment of impact as it first tries to overcome the inertia to remain at rest.

The optimum cue weight to accomplish maximum speed and compression before the cue snaps back and sends the cue ball forward is about 18 to 18 3/4 oz. for most men and about 17 to 17 3/4 oz. for most women.

What do I mean when I say compression? I mean that at the moment of impact, with sufficient speed, before the cue ball moves, the first thing that happens is the shaft bends away from it's spine creating an "S" shaped wave that travels through the cue as the cue is fore-shortened by it's compression, thus loading energy into the cue.

As the inertia to remain at rest is overcome, the cue ball is projected forward by the power of the player's arm and swing speed plus an additional kick from the pre-loaded cue, thus equaling cue power.

The more we can compress the shaft from the moment in which the cue ball is impacted until it leaves the tip, the more power you will develop.

You've seen the same kind of dynamics in the sport of pole vaulting, tennis and others. It is also applied in golf. Before the extra-whippy fiberglass pole was introduced in pole vaulting, when athletes

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just used a stiff wooden pole, the world record was just slightly over 15 feet high. Within one year of the introduction of the fiberglass pole, the world record was increased a whopping 20% to 18+ feet. The rest is history.

So then, the question is... how much compression/flexibility should a cue have? If you were to take a solid steel bar with no compression and put a tip on it, you would have a hard time striking the ball with enough force to bank 3 rails. I know this without question, I tested it myself.

On the other hand, when does a cue get so flexible that it over-compresses and does not return to shape until the cue ball is long gone, therefore losing power? With the use of the Myth Destroyer, our new testing robot, we have found that optimum point of compression and we now build it into every Meucci "RED DOT" shaft with 10% additional stiffness to allow for dimensional reduction through years of play. End Result: The most powerful cue in the world with the absolute least amount of effective cue

ball deflection!

However, this important feat can not be accomplished by only considering the technology of shaft taper and flexibility. You must also consider joint material, joint style (flat face or piloted), joint size, forearm taper, shallow inlays (as opposed to true spliced points) and solid or 2-piece butts. All these factors must be optimized to obtain maximum cue power.

Now then, how do you use this power?

First, when breaking the balls, increased power equals increased forward motion velocity.

Secondly, when striking the cue ball off-center, there is a combination of forward motion and english velocity (speed of side spin). Therefore, you will be able to reach the cue ball position desired when playing 9 ball, 8 ball, or other demanding pool games without having to over-stroke the ball and thus lose accuracy.

Some have said that too much power or spin equals less control. This of course would be true for an amateur or weaker player to some degree, but, if they use a low-power cue, they surely will not have the power when they need it for that 3-rail draw or follow shot.

The mistake they make is not understanding the technology of "percentage-of-tip" position-play. All truly great players break up a draw or follow shot into as many as 12 different tip positions in each area; above, below and left or right of center. They generally strike the cue ball about the same speed whenever possible and let tip position complete the job. If you master this same technique, it will enhance your game tremendously.

Remember, if your cue has limited power... so will you. So, get rid of that heavy cue – lighten up – and play better!

If you're interested in buying a meucci cue you might want to demonstrate the power of a meucci power piston demo cue (

http://www.budgetcues.com/meucci_demo_cue.htm

), or you might consider

checking out the meucci collectables (

<http://www.budgetcues.com/archive/>

). The official Meucci

Originals page can be found at

<http://www.meuccicues.com/>

Why A Meucci Power Piston?

By Bob Meucci

For those of you that understand the term "Power Piston" to mean a specific design in the Meucci line of cues, you already know what I am referring to. For those of you that do not know, a Power Piston refers to a combination of the Black Dot Bullseye shaft, but more importantly, a specific technology built into the butt section. The Power Piston butt is recognizable by the fact that the forearm (the area just below the joint and just above the wrap) is either going to be an ivory color or solid black. This area of the cue is a thin sleeve of high-impact plastic material over a maple dowel.

What this sleeve does for the player is to enhance the performance in two ways:

- 1) More power with less effort. This power being demonstrated by either more forward motion velocity, English velocity when using side, or a combination of the two.
- 2) The second thing that the power piston does for you the player is that it reduces the deflection of the cue ball (not to be confused with shaft deflection) even more than all other Meucci cues by 7–10%. This may not seem like a very large number to an amateur player, however, when you consider in the game of nine ball, one ball being 11% of the balls that need to be pocketed, it clarifies just how important that advantage can be.

What exactly happens when the cue ball is struck with a Black Dot Bullseye shaft with a Power Piston butt? Simply put, more compression of the pool cue at impact. The human arm, when swinging its arch to strike a ball, is only capable of a limited amount of speed and power. Therefore the cue design, in order to gain any advantage, must be balanced to that speed when the cue ball is struck. In other words, when the cue ball is struck, the cue then begins to compress (foreshorten) the overall length of the cue, loading the cue with additional power that will be added to the stroke that you've put on the ball when the loaded cue releases. All of this happens in a mere .140 inches (one hundred and forty thousandths of an inch!). That .140 of the inch that I've referred to is the total distance that the cue ball travels from the first impact of the tip until the cue ball leaves the tip. So the job of the cue maker is

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obviously one that has to be measured precisely to achieve this amazing advantage, and he must also take into consideration the weight of the cue ball.

This article has become fairly technical, and I hope that it is sufficiently understandable to those of you who care to know just what the advantage of having a Meucci Power Piston is.

Robert J Meucci is the CEO of Meucci Originals, Inc. Meucci Originals is well-known in the billiard industry for manufacturing (

<http://www.meuccicues.com/>

)pool and billiard cue products. If you're

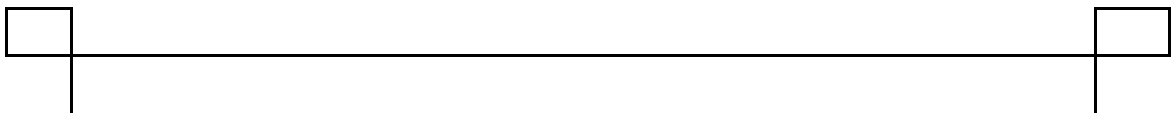
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