

WPA: World Pool-Billiard Association

(Effective 15/3/16)

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1. General Rules

The following General Rules apply to all the games covered by these rules except when contradicted by specific game rules. In addition, the Regulations of Pool Billiards cover aspects of the game not directly related to the game rules, such as equipment specifications and organization of events.

The games of Pool Billiards are played on a flat table covered with cloth and bounded by rubber cushions. The player uses a stick (pool cue) to strike a cue ball which in turn strikes object balls. The goal is to drive object balls into six pockets located at the cushion boundary. The games vary according to which balls are legal targets and the requirements to win a match.

[Editorial comments on the U.S. English version: The masculine gender has been used for simplicity of wording and is not intended to specify the gender of the players or officials. The word “game” is used to refer to a discipline such as nine ball rather than a rack or a match.]

1.1 Player's Responsibility

It is the player's responsibility to be aware of all rules, regulations and schedules applying to competition. While tournament officials will make every reasonable effort to have such information readily available to all players as appropriate, the ultimate responsibility rests with the player.

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1.2 Lagging to Determine Order of Play

The lag is the first shot of the match and determines order of play. The player who wins the lag chooses who will shoot first. The referee will place a ball on each side of the table behind the head string and near the head string. The players will shoot at about the same time to make each ball contact the foot cushion with the goal of returning the ball closer to the head cushion than the opponent. A lag shot is bad and cannot win if the shooter's ball:

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- (a) crosses the long string;
- b) contacts the foot cushion other than once;
- (c) is pocketed or driven off the table;
- (d) touches the side cushion; or
- (e) the ball rests within the corner pocket and past the nose of the head cushion. In addition, a lag will be bad if any non-object-ball foul occurs other than [6.9 Balls Still Moving](#). The players will lag again if:
 - (a) a player's ball is struck after the other ball has touched the foot cushion;
 - (b) the referee cannot determine which ball has stopped closer to the head cushion; or
 - (c) both lags are bad.

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1.3 Player's Use of Equipment

The equipment must meet existing WPA equipment specifications. In general, players are not permitted to introduce novel equipment into the game. The following uses, among others, are considered normal. If the player is uncertain about a particular use of equipment, he should discuss it with the tournament management prior to the start of play. The equipment must be used only for the purpose or in the manner that the equipment was intended. ([See 6.17 Unsportsmanlike Conduct.](#))

- (a) Cue Stick – The player is permitted to switch between cue sticks during the match, such as break, jump and normal cues. He may use either a built-in extender or an add-on extender to increase the length of the stick.
- (b) Chalk – The player may apply chalk to his tip to prevent miscues, and may use his own chalk, provided its color is compatible with the cloth.
- (c) Mechanical Bridges – The player may use up to two mechanical bridges to support the cue stick during the shot. The configuration of the bridges is up to the player. He may use his own bridge if it is similar to standard bridges.
- (d) Gloves – The player may use gloves to improve the grip and/or bridge hand function.
- (e) Powder – A player is allowed to use powder in a reasonable amount as determined by the referee.

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1.4 Spotting Balls

Balls are spotted (returned to play on the table) by placing them on the long string (long axis of the table) as close as possible to the foot spot and between the foot spot and the foot rail, without moving any interfering ball. If the spotted ball cannot be placed on the foot spot, it should be placed in contact (if possible) with the corresponding interfering ball. However, when the cue ball is next to the spotted ball, the spotted ball should not be placed in contact with the cue ball; a small separation must be maintained. If all of the long string below the foot spot is blocked by other balls, the ball is spotted above the foot spot, and as close as possible to the foot spot.

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1.5 Cue Ball in Hand

When the cue ball is in hand, the shooter may place the cue ball anywhere on the playing surface (see [8.1 Parts of the Table](#)) and may continue to move the cue ball until he executes a shot. (See definition [8.2 Shot](#).) Players may use any part of the cue stick to move the cue ball, including the tip, but not with a forward stroke motion. In some games and for most break shots, placement of the cue ball may be restricted to the area behind the head string depending on the rules of the game, and then [6.10 Bad Cue Ball Placement](#) and [6.11 Bad Play from Behind the Head String](#) may apply.

When the shooter has the cue ball in hand behind the head string and all the legal object balls are behind the head string, he may request the legal object ball nearest the head string to be spotted. If two or more balls are equal distance from the head string, the shooter may designate which of the equidistant balls is to be spotted. An object ball that rests exactly on the head string is playable.

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1.6 Standard Call Shot

In games in which the shooter is required to call shots, the intended ball and pocket must be indicated for each shot if they are not obvious. Details of the shot, such as cushions struck or other balls contacted or pocketed are irrelevant. Only one ball may be called on each shot.

For a called shot to count, the referee must be satisfied that the intended shot was made, so if there is any chance of confusion, e.g. with bank, combination and similar shots, the shooter should indicate the ball and pocket. If the referee or opponent is unsure of the shot to be played, he may ask for a call.

In call shot games, the shooter may choose to call “safety” instead of a ball and pocket, and then play passes to the opponent at the end of the shot. Whether balls are being spotted after safeties depends on the rules of the particular game.

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1.7 Balls Settling

A ball may settle slightly after it appears to have stopped, possibly due to slight imperfections in the ball or the table. Unless this causes a ball to fall into a pocket, it is considered a normal hazard of play, and the ball will not be moved back. If a ball falls into a pocket as the result of such settling, it is restored as closely as possible to its original position. If a settling ball falls into a pocket during or just prior to a shot, and this has an effect on the shot, the referee will restore the position and the shot will be replayed. The shooter is not penalized for shooting while a ball is settling. See also [8.3 Ball Pocketed](#).

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1.8 Restoring a Position

When necessary for balls to be restored or cleaned, the referee will restore disturbed balls to their original positions to the best of his ability. The players must accept the referee’s judgment as to placement.

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1.9 Outside Interference

When outside interference occurs during a shot that has an effect on the outcome of that shot, the referee will restore the balls to the positions they had before the shot, and the shot will be replayed. If the interference had no effect on the shot, the referee will restore the disturbed balls and play will continue. If the balls cannot be restored to their original positions, the situation is handled like a stalemate.

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1.10 Prompting Calls and Protesting Rulings

If a player feels that the referee has made an error in judgment, he may ask the referee to reconsider his call or lack of call, but the referee's decision on judgment calls is final. However, if the player feels that the referee is not applying the rules correctly, he may ask for ruling by the designated appeals authority. The referee will suspend play while this appeal is in process. (See also part (d) of [6.17 Unsportsmanlike Conduct](#).) Fouls must be called promptly. (See [6. Fouls](#).)

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1.11 Concession

If a player concedes, he loses the match. For example, if a player unscrews his jointed playing cue stick while the opponent is at the table and during the opponent's decisive rack of a match, it will be considered a concession of the match.

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1.12 Stalemate

If the referee observes that no progress is being made towards a conclusion, he will announce his decision, and each player will have three more turns at the table. Then, if the referee determines that there is still no progress, he will declare a stalemate. If both players agree, they may accept the stalemate without taking their three additional turns. The procedure for a stalemate is specified under the rules for each game.

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3. Eight Ball

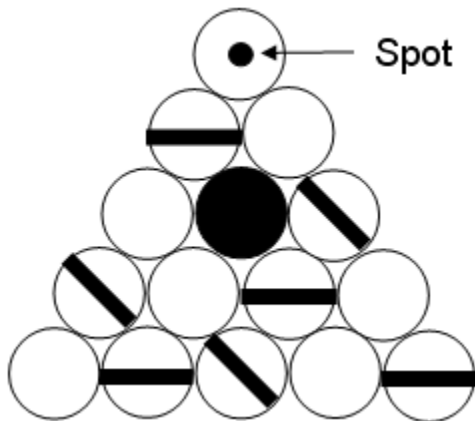
Eight ball is played with fifteen numbered object balls and the cue ball. The shooter's group of seven balls (one through seven or nine through fifteen) must all be off the table before he attempts to pocket the eight ball to win. Shots are called.

3.1 Determining First Break

The player winning the lag has the option to determine who has to execute the first break shot. (See [1.2 Lagging to Determine Order of Play](#).) The standard format is alternate break (See Regulation 16, Subsequent Break Shots.)

3.2 Eight Ball Rack

The fifteen object balls are racked as tightly as possible in a triangle, with the apex ball on the foot spot and the eight ball as the first ball that is directly below the apex ball. One from each group of seven will be on the two lower corners of the triangle. The other balls are placed in the triangle without purposeful or intentional pattern.



Eight Ball Rack

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3.3 Break Shot

The following rules apply to the break shot:

- (a) The cue ball begins in hand behind the head string.
- (b) No ball is called, and the cue ball is not required to hit any particular object ball first.
- (c) If the breaker pockets a ball and does not foul, he continues at the table, and the table remains open. (See [3.4 Open Table / Choosing Groups](#).)
- (d) If no object ball is pocketed, at least four object balls must be driven to one or more rails, or the shot results in an illegal break, and the incoming player has the option of

- (1) accepting the table in position, or
- (2) re-racking and breaking, or
- (3) re-racking and allowing the offending player to break again.

(e) Pocketing the eight ball on a legal break shot is not a foul. If the eight ball is pocketed, the breaker has the option of

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- (1) re-spotting the eight ball and accepting the balls in position, or
- (2) re-breaking.

(f) If the breaker pockets the eight ball and scratches ([see definition 8.6 Scratch](#)), the opponent has the option of

- (1) re-spotting the eight ball and shooting with cue ball in hand behind the head string; or
- (2) re-breaking.

(g) If any object ball is driven off the table on a break shot, it is a foul; such balls remain out of play (except the eight ball which is re-spotted); and the incoming player has the option of

- (1) accepting the table in position, or
- (2) taking cue ball in hand behind the head string.

(h) If the breaker fouls in any manner not listed above, the following player has the option of

- (1) accepting the balls in position, or
- (2) taking cue ball in hand behind the head string.

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3.4 Open Table / Choosing Groups

Before groups are determined, the table is said to be “open,” and before each shot, the shooter must call his intended ball. If the shooter legally pockets his called ball, the corresponding group becomes his, and his opponent is assigned the other group. If he fails to legally pocket his called ball, the table remains open and play passes to the other player. When the table is “open”, any object ball may be struck first except the eight ball.

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3.5 Continuing Play

The shooter remains at the table as long as he continues to legally pocket called balls, or he wins the rack by pocketing the eight ball.

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3.6 Shots Required to Be Called

On each shot except the break, shots must be called as explained in [1.6 Standard Call Shot](#). The eight ball may be called only after the shot on which the shooter’s group has been cleared from the table. The shooter may call “safety” in which case play passes to the opponent at the end of the shot and any object ball pocketed on the safety remains pocketed. (See [8.17 Safety Shot](#).)

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3.7 Spotting Balls

If the eight ball is pocketed or driven off the table on the break, it will be spotted or the balls will be re-racked. (See [3.3 Break Shot](#) and [1.4 Spotting Balls](#).) No other object ball is ever spotted.

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3.8 Losing the Rack

The shooter loses if he

- (a) pockets the eight ball and fouls.;
- (b) pockets the eight ball before his group is cleared;
- (c) pockets the eight ball in an uncalled pocket; or
- (d) drives the eight ball off the table.

These do not apply to the break shot. (See [3.3 Break Shot](#).)

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3.9 Standard Fouls

If the shooter commits a foul, play passes to his opponent. The cue ball is in hand, and the incoming player may place it anywhere on the playing surface. (See [1.5 Cue Ball in Hand](#).) The following are standard fouls at eight ball:

The following are standard fouls at eight ball:

[6.1 Cue Ball Scratch or off the Table](#)

[6.2 Wrong Ball First](#) The first ball contacted by the cue ball on each shot must belong to the shooter's group, except when the table is open. (See [3.4 Open Table / Choosing Groups](#)).

[6.3 No Rail after Contact](#)

[6.4 No Foot on Floor](#)

[6.5 Ball Driven off the Table](#) (See [3.7 Spotting Balls](#).)

[6.6 Touched Ball](#)

[6.7 Double Hit / Frozen Balls](#)

[6.8 Push Shot](#)

[6.9 Balls Still Moving](#)

[6.10 Bad Cue Ball Placement](#)

[6.11 Bad Play from Behind the Head String](#)

[6.12 Cue Stick on the Table](#)

[6.13 Playing out of Turn](#)

[6.15 Slow Play](#)

[6.16 Ball Rack Template Foul](#)

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3.10 Serious Fouls

The fouls listed under [3.8 Losing the Rack](#) are penalized by the loss of the current rack. For [6.17 Unsportsmanlike Conduct](#), the referee will choose a penalty appropriate given the nature of the offense.

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3.11 Stalemate

If a stalemate occurs ([see 1.12 Stalemate](#)), the original breaker of the rack will break again.