

St. Louis Senior Olympics

Billiards – 8 Ball Rules

1. Game rules shall be in accordance with the A.P.A. (American Pool players Association).
2. Tournament will be divided by age groups only if there is a sufficient number of entries. Decision of the director is final.
3. Men and women will play against each other unless there are more than eight women who enter.
4. The break: by flip of coin.
5. Player will be considered in default if he/she is not present 15 minutes after the scheduled start.
6. Two out of three games will determine the winner. Competition will be single elimination.

8-BALL

1. GENERAL DESCRIPTION - 8-Ball is played with a cue ball and a normal rack of fifteen (15) object balls. Balls are racked with the front ball on the foot spot and the 8-ball in the center of the triangle. The primary purpose of this game is for one player to pocket the solid colored group of balls numbered from 1 to 7 or the striped balls numbered from 9 to 15. Choice of balls to be pocketed is made by the player legally pocketing the first ball of the game.

For example, if the first ball scored in the game is the 3-ball, then the player must pocket the rest of the balls from 1 to 7 while the opposing player attempts to pocket all the balls from 9 to 15. The turn passes from one player to the next whenever the shooter fails to pocket a ball of his category or fouls. A player legally pocketing a ball of his category must continue to shoot. Winner of the game is the player pocketing his numerical group of balls first, followed by legally pocketing the 8-ball. The 8-ball must be pocketed in a marked pocket.

2. LAGGING - Players will lag (see LAG described in Definitions) to see who has first break and from that point on the winner breaks. If the lagged balls make contact during the lag, lag over.

3. RACKING - All balls should be frozen (touching) as tightly as possible. The breaking player may request and receive a re-rack.

4. BREAKING - Players must break from behind the head string. Breaking safe or soft is not allowed. At least four balls from the rack must be driven to the rails or a ball must be pocketed. Otherwise, the balls are re-racked and re-broken by the same player. A game not legally broken (four balls do not go to a rail), but resulting in a scratch or foul, will be re-racked and broken by the opposite player. The rack must be struck before a foul can occur. The head ball or the second ball must be struck on the break and the cue ball may not be shot into a rail before the rack. An attempt to break does not count unless the rack is broken as above. The League Operator may make judgments and issue and players who are not breaking hard. Breaking just hard enough to comply with this rule is not a guarantee against penalties. Break as hard as you can with control.

5. AFTER THE BREAK - Various circumstances can occur upon completion of the break. They are:

a. A foul on the break will result in ball in hand behind the head string and the incoming table as defined in "5e". The incoming player may then shoot at any ball that is outside the head string. Outside the head string is determined by

aligning the middle or base of the ball with the imaginary line (head string) between the centers of the two appropriate diamonds (see diagram of table).

If an object ball is dead center or out, then it is playable. If it is in, the ball is not playable. If the two players cannot agree on an object ball being in or out, then a third party is consulted for an opinion. If a third party is consulted, his opinion is final. If no third party is available or agreed upon, then a flip of a coin will decide the issue.

The cue ball must be in as described above before play can begin. It is up to the opponent to check to be sure the cue ball is in before it is shot. No penalty may be assessed. The shooter must move the cue ball into a position acceptable to the opponent. To refuse and shoot anyway will be considered a sportsmanship violation to be reported to the League Office.

b. No balls are pocketed and it is the other player's turn.

c. The 8-ball is made. This is a winner unless the player scratches, in which case he loses.

d. One ball is made (example: 3-ball); now is still the breaker's turn and he is shooting low balls or the solids.

e. One of each type ball is made (example: the 6-ball and the 12-ball). Now the breaker has his choice. He may shoot at either type of ball. He may shoot any ball, except the 8-ball, and anything that goes in counts. If he were to make one of each on his second shot, he would still have an open table and the choice as after the break. If he were to miss on his second shot, his opponent would have an open table. Open table means a player can shoot a combination involving a stripe and a solid and whichever he makes would be his ball.

Example: If a player has an open table, and he shoots the 6-ball into the 10-ball, and the 10 goes in the pocket; he has stripes (high balls) and must strike the stripes first from that point on.

f. If two balls of one type and one ball of the other type are pocketed (example: 3, 6, and 10-balls) it is the shooter's choice just as in "5e" above.

g. Occasionally, it occurs after the break, or anytime during the game for that matter, that a player mistakenly starts shooting the wrong category of balls. Although it is sportsman like for the sitting player to remind the shooting player that he is about to foul by shooting the wrong category of balls, it is not a requirement for him to do so. Once the shooter has hit the wrong category of balls, the foul has occurred whether the ball is pocketed or not. If the ball is pocketed, it is permissible, though not recommended, that the sitting player allow the shooting player to continue shooting his balls in until he feels inclined to call the foul. The shooting player can escape penalty by quietly realizing his error and returning to shoot the correct category of balls and legally contacting one of them before his opponent calls foul, or by finishing off the wrong category of balls and legally contacting the 8-ball prior to his opponent calling a foul. In other words, the sitting player must call the foul before the shooter returns to the correct category and legally contacts one or before the shooter pockets the remaining balls of the wrong category and legally contacts the 8-ball. Before any foul has occurred, the shooter also may avoid penalty by asking the sitting player which category of balls he has. The sitting player must tell him the truth.

6. COMBINATION SHOTS - Combination shots are legal, but striking the correct ball first is required except in the open table situation. The 8-ball is not neutral. A player is credited with all balls he legally pockets. When a player does not pocket one of his balls, but pockets an opponent's ball, he loses his turn. The opponent does get credit for the pocketed ball. No pocketed ball is ever spotted.

7. BALLS ON THE FLOOR - If the 8-ball is knocked on the floor, it is loss of game. Other object balls that get knocked on the floor will be spotted. If the spot is taken, then the ball will be placed on a line directly behind the spot

as close to the spot as possible. Knocking a ball other than the cue ball on the floor is not a foul. It might occur that a player pockets his ball while simultaneously knocking some other ball on the floor. In this situation, it is still his turn and the ball is not spotted until he misses. If the ball on the floor is one of the shooter's balls, then it is spotted when the shooter has pocketed all of his other balls or misses.

8. POCKETED BALLS - Balls must remain in a pocket to be legal. If a ball goes in a pocket, but bounces back onto the playing surface, it is not considered pocketed. If it is the 8-ball, it is not to be considered as either a win or a loss. If it is the cue ball, it is not to be considered a scratch.

Note 1: If a ball, which has been hanging in a pocket for more than a few seconds, suddenly falls in, it is to be placed back on the table where it was originally sitting. Once a ball has stopped all motion, it cannot move again without unfair outside forces affecting it. So, if it falls in a pocket, it is to be placed back on the table where it was before it fell.

Note 2: It occasionally happens on tables with small pockets that two balls become jammed in a pocket and are leaning over the edge of the slate to some degree. They are off the playing surface and are pocketed. Throw them in and resume playing the game unless the pocketing ends the game (8-ball or cue scratch when shooting the 8-ball).

9. ONE FOOT ON THE FLOOR - At least one foot must be on the floor at all times while shooting if a bridge stick is present. League Management cannot guarantee the presence of bridges and many Host Locations do not have them. There is no foul - simply stop the shooter and hand him the bridge.

10. THERE ARE VARIOUS WAYS TO LOSE:

- a. The opposing player pockets his numerical group and legally pockets the 8-ball.
- b. Player pockets the 8-ball out of turn or knocks it on the floor.
- c. When playing the 8-ball, a player pockets the 8-ball in the wrong pocket or fails to properly mark the pocket where the 8-ball went in.
- d. Player fouls the cue ball and then pockets the 8-ball.
- e. When playing the 8-ball, a player scratches the cue ball. He loses whether or not he pockets the 8-ball.

Note 1: Player shooting at the 8-ball and missing it altogether has fouled and his opponent has ball in hand, but he doesn't lose because of this foul.

Note 2: A game is forfeited if the shooter alters the course of the 8-ball or the cue ball in a game-losing situation.

Example: The shooter is shooting the 4-ball, misses the pocket, and the 4-ball hits the 8-ball. The 8-ball is going toward the pocket and the shooter reaches out and stops it and tries to claim that it is only a ball in hand foul. Wrong, it is a loss of game.

11. FOULS - If any of the following fouls are committed, the penalty is ball in hand for the incoming player. Make certain you have ball in hand before you touch the cue ball. Confirm it with your opponent before touching the cue ball. Ball in hand might be new for many members and therefore warrants further explanation. Ball in hand means you get to put the cue ball anywhere on the table (with the exception of fouls on the break which results in ball in hand behind the head string), and shoot any of your balls (or the 8-ball, if all your category of balls have been pocketed) regardless of where that ball is. A player exercising his rights under the ball in hand rule may place the

cue ball on the table anywhere that he desires. Even after having addressed the cue ball a player may, if not satisfied with the placement, make further adjustments with the hand, cue stick or any other reasonable piece of equipment. A foul may be called only if the player fouls the cue ball while actually stroking the cue ball, meaning a double hit of the cue ball (sometimes called double clutching). The ball in hand rule penalizes a player for an error. Without this rule, a person can actually benefit by accidentally or purposely scratching or otherwise fouling. In the unlikely event that a game should ever become stalemated, meaning that neither player wants or can make use of ball in hand, then the balls would be re-racked, the same player breaks and the innings for the stalemated game are crossed off the score sheet.

These are the only fouls resulting in ball in hand and they are as follows:

- a. Anytime the cue ball goes in a pocket.
- b. Failure to hit a correct ball first. (A player who is shooting stripes must hit a striped ball first). In general, the shooter has the advantage in such situations unless his opponent has asked an outside party to watch the hit. Protect yourself. If you think your opponent is getting ready to shoot a shot that could possibly be a bad hit, stop him from shooting and get someone to watch the shot. Potential bad hit situations are usually fairly obvious and protests and disputes over these close situations can almost always be avoided if someone is asked to watch the shot.
- c. Failure to hit a rail after contact. A rail must be hit by either the cue ball or any other ball after the cue ball and the object ball contact. A pocketed ball counts as a rail. A sentence that should answer many questions is: ANY ball must go to a rail AFTER LEGAL contact.
- d. The object ball is frozen to a rail and the player is contemplating playing a safety (see SAFETY described in Definitions). In order for the following frozen ball rule to be in effect, the opponent must declare that the ball is frozen and the player should verify. Once it is agreed that the ball is frozen, then the player must either drive the object ball to another rail (of course, it could hit another ball, which in turn hits a rail), or drive the cue ball to the rail after it touches the object ball. If the latter method of safety is chosen then the player should take care that he quite obviously strikes the object ball first. If the cue ball strikes the rail first or appears to hit both the rail and ball simultaneously, then it would be a foul unless either the cue or object ball went to some other rail.
- e. It is illegal and, therefore, a foul to jump a cue ball over another ball by miscuing it up in the air on purpose. Accidental miscuing is not a foul unless other rules in this section are violated.
- f. Anytime the cue ball goes on the floor, or otherwise ends up off the playing surface.
- g. Causing even the slightest movement of the cue ball, even accidentally, is a foul. It is not a foul, however, to accidentally move any other balls (including the 8-ball) unless, during the process of shooting, a player moves a ball and it in turn strikes the cue ball. Even dropping the chalk on the cue ball is a foul. Any balls moved accidentally during a shot will be replaced by the opponent after the shot is over and all balls have stopped rolling. If it occurs before the shot, it will be replaced before the shot is taken.
- h. If, during the course of a shot, the cue ball does not touch anything.
- i. Exercise caution when placing the cue ball on the table. The cue ball is always alive and if it touches another ball, it is a cue ball foul and your opponent has ball in hand. Be especially careful when you are placing the cue ball in a tight spot.

12. HOW TO WIN - A player has won the game when all the balls of his numerical group have been pocketed, and he has legally pocketed the 8-ball in a properly marked pocket without scratching. To properly mark the pocket, a

coaster or some other mutually agreed upon marker must be placed next to the pocket the 8-ball is intended to enter. Both teams may use the same marker. Only one marker may be on the table. If the marker is already at the intended pocket from a previous attempt or game, it is not necessary for the shooter to touch it, pick it up, or reposition it.

Note: You cannot play the 8-ball at the same time you play the last ball of your category. The 8-ball must be a separate shot.