

WPBA TOURNAMENT 9-BALL RULES AND REGULATIONS

Note: The following rules are specific to WPBA-sanctioned professional tournaments and outline the most often-asked questions.

OBJECT OF THE GAME: Nine ball is played with nine object balls numbered one through nine and a cue ball. On each shot the first ball the cue ball contacts must be the lowest-numbered ball on the table, but the balls need not be pocketed in order. If a player pockets any ball on a legal shot, she remains at the table for another shot, and continues until she misses, fouls, or wins the game by pocketing the nine ball. After a miss, the incoming player must shoot from the position left by the previous player, but after any foul shot the incoming player may start with the cue ball anywhere on the table. Players are not required to call any shot except to declare a push out.

RACKING THE BALLS: The object balls are racked in a diamond shape, with the one ball at the top of the diamond and on the foot spot, the nine ball in the center of the diamond, and the other balls in random order, racked as tightly as possible.

ORDER OF PLAY: The order of play is determined by lag. Player's "cue ball" arriving closest to the head rail wins the option to break or have opponent break, providing their "cue ball" did not touch the long cushion, cross the center of the table, strike the foot cushion more than once, scratch, or come to rest inside the pocket. Thereafter, winner breaks.

LEGAL BREAK: To be legal, the cue ball must travel from its initial spot behind the head string and strike the one ball, driving at least four balls to any rail. Once the cue ball has passed the head string by striking the cue ball with the cue tip, it will be considered an attempt to break. If a player attempt to break and the cue ball has traveled past the head string, the player may not stop or impede cue ball by any means, or may not double hit cue ball. Such action will be considered a foul. If a legal break does not occur then the incoming player may take cue ball in hand, or may have balls re-racked and may break. If rack is undisturbed, cue ball must be placed behind the head string and player must attempt a legal break.

PUSH OUT: The player who shoots the shot immediately after a legal break may play a push-out in an attempt to move the cue ball into a better position for the option that follows. On a push-out the cue ball may contact any ball, even if it is not the lowest numbered ball on the table, and is not required to contact any rail. You do not have to contact a ball to be a legal push-out. All other foul rules still apply. The player must announce her intention of playing a push out before the shot, or the shot is considered to be a normal shot. To avoid conflict, make eye contact with opponent when declaring a push-out. Any ball pocketed on a push remains pocketed except the 9-ball, which gets spotted on the foot spot. Following a legal push-out, the incoming player is permitted to shoot from that position or to pass the shot back to the player who pushed out. A push-out is not considered to be a foul unless the cue ball or an object ball comes to rest off the playing surface or the cue ball scratches. An illegal push-out is penalized with ball in hand for the opponent. After a player scratches on the break shot, the incoming player cannot play a push-out.

LEGAL SHOT: To be a legal shot, the cue ball must always hit the lowest-numbered ball first and either cause an object ball to be pocketed or cause any ball, including the cue ball, to contact a rail. Failure to do so is a foul, with incoming player taking cue ball in hand.

CONTINUING PLAY: If the breaker pockets one or more balls on a legal break, she continues to shoot until she misses, fouls, or wins the game. If the player misses or fouls, the other player begins her inning and shoots until she misses, fouls, or wins. The game is won when the nine ball is pocketed on a legal shot.

FOULS: A foul is committed if:

- A player pockets the cue ball.
- Fails to strike the lowest numbered ball first.
- Fails to drive any ball to a rail after legal contact.
- Any ball comes to rest off the playing surface.
- A player touches the cue ball in play.

Also, when a match is presided over by a referee it is a foul if any ball is touched before, during or after a shot except for the momentary contact of the cue tip and cue ball during normal execution of a shot.

If a match is not refereed, it is a foul to touch the cue ball in play; to purposely touch an object ball; or to accidentally disturb an object ball that has any effect on the outcome of the shot. At the non-shooting player's option and discretion, the disturbed balls may be restored to their original position or left in their new position. If, after the non-shooting player exercises this option and the resulting position of the object ball affects the shot outcome, it is still not a foul.

When a match is not refereed, it is a foul if during an attempt to jump, curve or masse the cue ball over or around an impeding numbered ball, the impeding ball moves (regardless of whether or not it was moved by a hand, cue stick follow-through or bridge).

It is a foul when the intended object ball is frozen to a rail, and the player fails to pocket a ball, drive the cue ball to a rail, or send the object ball to another rail. For this rule to be in effect, the frozen object ball must be declared by the non-shooting player and acknowledged by the shooting player prior to the shot taking place.

Further, it is also a foul if:

- A shot is played without having at least one foot on the floor at the moment the cue tip strikes the cue ball.
- A shot is played while any ball is in motion (a spinning ball is in motion).
- A player strikes the cue ball below center ("digs under it") and intentionally causes it to rise off the bed of the table in an effort to clear an obstructing ball.
- Any miscue when executing a jump shot or masse is a foul.
- The cue ball is frozen to an illegal object ball and that ball is moved in the process of shooting.
- The tip of the cue stick strikes the cue ball more than once during the execution of a shot or is still in contact with the cue ball when it strikes the object ball.
- Two or more object balls are inadvertently disturbed.

***NOTE** – when the cue ball is frozen to or close to the object ball and the player is shooting directly at the object ball, it is difficult to see the double hit. Therefore, in this situation, if the cue ball travels at a similar speed as the object ball, a foul will be called.

DEVICES: Players are not allowed to use a ball, rack or any width measuring device to see if the cue ball or an object ball would travel through a space between two balls or ball and cushion etc. Doing so is a foul. Only the cue stick may be used as an aid to judge gaps, etc., so long as the cue is held by the hand. To do so otherwise is a foul.

CATCHING BALLS: During game play, a player may not catch, touch or in any way deliberately interfere with a ball as it enters the pocket. The incoming player will receive ball in hand including if the ball does not fall in the pocket.

BALL IN HAND: When the cue ball is in hand, the player may place the cue ball anywhere on the bed of the table. She may continue to adjust the position of the cue ball until she takes the shot. If the end of the tip touches the cue ball during adjustment it is also a foul. If cue ball touches any object ball during placement it is a foul. This includes but is not limited to the cue ball touching chalk, hair and clothing.

OBJECT BALLS JUMPED OFF THE TABLE: Object balls jumped from the table or pocketed on a foul stay down, except the nine ball, which is spotted on the foot spot.

THREE CONSECUTIVE FOULS: If the same player commits three consecutive fouls during a game, it is loss of game. Any foul committed on the break counts towards the three foul rule. The opponent, or referee, if present, must warn player that she is on two fouls, for third foul to result in loss of game; otherwise player remains on two fouls unless a legal hit is executed.

TOUCHED OBJECT BALL: It is not a foul to accidentally touch stationary object balls while in the act of shooting, but it is a foul if the player shooting attempts to restore the moved object ball before giving the non-shooter the option of placement. If such an accident occurs, the player should allow the referee or non-shooting player to restore the object balls to their correct positions. At the non-shooting player's option, the disturbed balls can be left as is. In this case, the balls are considered restored, and subsequent contact on them is not a foul. If the accident has any effect on the outcome of the shot, it is a foul. (Example: Player shooting the cue ball into the one ball moves the three ball accidentally. The cue balls path then crosses where the three ball used to be, but since the three ball was repositioned, the cue ball and three do not collide. This would be a foul.). It is a foul to touch a moving ball or to allow that ball to hit any foreign object, such as a cube of chalk (the top of the rail is not considered to be a foreign object).

RAIL SAFETY: When an object ball is close to a rail but not frozen, and the players are taking turns softly tapping the object ball with the cue ball to the same rail, this is called a rail safety. The player who performed this shot first must make the cue ball hit any rail or make the object ball go to a different rail on her third attempt – or it is a foul.

SETTLING INTO PLACE: A ball may settle slightly after it appears to have stopped, possibly due to slight imperfections in the equipment or floor movement. If a ball falls into a pocket as the result of such settling, after being immobile for 5 seconds, it is replaced as close as possible to its original position. If a ball falls into a pocket during or just prior to a shot, and has an effect on the shot, the referee will restore the position and the shot will be replayed. Players are not penalized for shooting while a ball is settling.

SPLIT HIT: In very rare circumstances, it is possible for the cue ball to contact two object balls at the same time. This is called a split hit and is not considered a foul.

WPBA GENERAL RULES AND GUIDELINES

SCHEDULE: Each player is responsible for keeping her own schedule.

CALLING A REFEREE: It is the responsibility of the non-shooting player to call the referee before any controversial shot is attempted. Shooting player must wait for the referee to arrive before attempting the shot. The decision of the referee is final.

FORFEITS: Players will have 15 minutes to report to their match, or the player will forfeit that match.

FIVE MINUTE TIME OUT: Players are allowed one 5-minute time-out during each match. A time-out may only be taken between racks. If the opponent chooses to continue play, a referee must first be called to watch the game. If the opponent chooses not to continue play, but also leaves the arena, she must return immediately upon player's return. Opponent may choose to hit balls while waiting for player to return, but neither may practice on another table inside or outside the tournament arena. NOTE: Players taking their time out must leave the tournament arena and retire to a private area designated for players only, or to a restroom or lounge area.

ETIQUETTE: Whenever possible, players must be seated while their opponent is shooting. Unscrewing your cue while opponent is at the table is loss of game. Conceding the nine ball is not allowed and punishable by \$25 fine. (This fine will not be imposed by the Flamingo Billiards Tour.)

SHOT CLOCK USAGE: All televised matches incorporate the use of a shot clock. In non-televised events, if a match is progressing slowly when half the allotted time is expired, a shot clock will be put into place. Slow progress is defined as a match in which fewer than 8 games total have been completed or neither player has won at least 7 games (in a race to nine). Matches not on schedule will be placed on a shot clock by the tournament director at the end of the game in progress. The 30 second shot clock begins when all balls have stopped rolling and stops when the cue tip strikes the cue ball. A player must request a ten (10) second verbal warning from the shot clock administrator. A ten (10) second warning is not to be issued when a player is down over a shot. If 20 seconds has elapsed and the player stands up or breaks focus from the shot in any way, a verbal ten (10) second warning is then issued. Failure to shoot within the 30 second time frame is a foul, allowing the opponent cue ball in hand. One 30 second extension is allowed per player, per game. If the clocked match score is at a total of sixteen games (8/8 in a race to nine) both players are then allowed two extensions during that final game of the match. Players must verbally request an extension and be acknowledged by the clock administrator. Extensions will automatically be granted if a player from another table is shooting and causes the clocked player to wait for their shot, player requires the mechanical bridge, or spectator actions cause interference with either the player or the clock administrator. Time resumes when the player can once again approach the table without interference. The extension rule may also apply when there are announcements from the tournament director host, or either player calls for a referee to judge a hit or situation. Time resumes once the referee has made a decision or is in a position to observe the shot.

ILLEGAL MARKING: Players are not allowed to mark the cushions or table cloth with chalk marks, etc. Doing so will be considered a foul.

INTERFERENCE: Intentionally distracting or interfering with opponent's play is illegal and can be declared a foul at the discretion of the tournament director.

SPECTATORS: Conversation with spectators is not allowed either during play or while on break, except in the context of showmanship. Spectators may not be called upon to witness a hit, make a call, or lend advice at any time during a match. NOTE: Failure to comply with the two previous rules may constitute a foul or un-sportsmanlike behavior punishable by warning or fine.

OUTSIDE INTERFERENCE: Should a spectator intentionally distract any player during a match, the player should not approach the spectator, but ask the tournament director to advise the spectator of their distracting behavior. If the behavior continues, only the tournament director and/or host has the authority to remove the fan from the arena.

USE OF NON-TRADITIONAL EQUIPMENT: It is the responsibility of the player to bring non-traditional equipment to the attention of the specifications committee BEFORE using such equipment in professional competition. If the specs committee has no set guideline already in place regarding the use of the equipment, the committee may disallow its use until a ruling can be made. The committee is allowed no less than 45 days for such a ruling to take place, during which time the equipment may not be used. If, after the 45 days, no decision has been reached by the committee, the equipment in question may be used until a final ruling is made