

Luton & District Monday Pool League



8 Ball Rules of the Game – September 2015



1. THE GAME

The game shall be known as 8 Ball Pool and referred to in these rules as "the game". It is intended that players and teams should play 8 Ball Pool in the true spirit of the game and in a sportsmanlike manner. It should be clearly understood that the referee is the sole judge of what is fair and unfair play. The referee will take whatever action is necessary to ensure that these rules are observed.

2. REQUIREMENTS OF THE GAME

The game is played on a rectangular 6-pocket table with 15 balls, plus a cue ball.

Balls comprise two groups, represented by two different sets of 7 coloured balls plus the 8 ball which is black.

Alternatively, numerical balls may be used numbered 1-7, which are plain coloured balls and 9-15, which are striped coloured balls. Balls in the two groups are known as object balls.

The use of Pro Cup balls (notable differences being a spotted cue ball and a striped black/8 ball) is also permitted but not compulsory.

3. OBJECT OF THE GAME

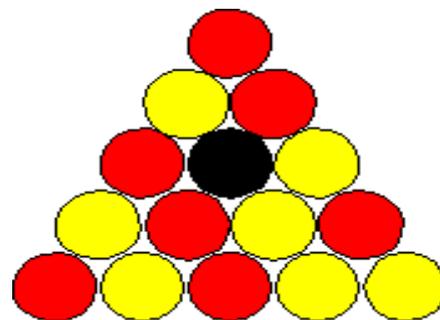
The player or team pocketing their group of object balls first in any order and then legally pocketing the 8 ball (black), wins the game.

4. COMMENCEMENT OF THE GAME (OR RE-START)

a) The balls are racked as illustrated (right) with the 8 ball (black) on the 8 ball spot which is at the intersection of the centre and corner pockets (colour groups can be interchangeable from the diagram shown).

b) Order of play is determined by the player representing the 'away' team breaking in the first frame and the 'home' team providing a referee. This will then alternate in each frame for the remainder of the match.

c) The opening player plays at the triangle of object balls by striking the cue ball from any position on or behind the baulk line. That player must pot one or more object balls or cause at least two object balls (not including the cue ball) to strike cushions. This constitutes a legal break. If a legal break is played, but no ball is pocketed, the opening player's visit is over and the opposing player commences their visit and can choose to pot either of the coloured groups (which is subsequently nominated on pocketing).



d) If the cue ball is pocketed from the break or forced off the table, the opposing player is awarded two visits and play continues from on or behind the baulk line. If coloured balls were also pocketed, these are ignored. The table remains open, and the opposing player can play either of the coloured groups. See also rules 4e and 4f.

e) If rule 4d is enforced, or the table is still open when a foul is committed, the oncoming player has a unique situation of a 'free table' and 'open table' simultaneously. If the player plays a 'free ball' on their first shot, they are still entitled to elect the opposite colour group with their second shot, this is the only time they will actually need to nominate a free ball to ensure it is clear to the referee. If only one ball is pocketed during that combination of shots then that group is elected as the player's colour group. However if the player has elected to play a 'free ball' (which was pocketed) in their first shot, then the second ball pocketed will be elected as the player's colour group. If no balls are pocketed during those visits then the table remains open. If the player fails to nominate the 'free ball' in this situation and pockets a ball on their first shot, the referee will call this as the player's nominated colour group.

f) Foul break:-

- The cue ball fails to strike any object ball during the break shot.
- The cue ball strikes the stack of object balls during the break shot, but no object ball is pocketed AND less than two object balls strike cushions.

In cases of a foul break, the oncoming player receives two visits and a free table. He or she then has the option of playing on from how the table lies, or taking a re-rack (with two visits and a free table).

g) If the player pockets the 8 ball (black) from the break, the game shall be restarted by the same player. No penalty will be incurred. The balls are to be re-racked. This applies even if other balls, including the cue ball, are pocketed as well.

h) If a ball or balls are legally pocketed, this entitles the player to one additional shot and this continues until the player either fails to pot one of his/her set of allocated balls, or commits a foul at any time.

i) If a player has an open table, and on playing their shot balls belonging to both coloured groups are pocketed, no group is nominated. That player remains in control of the table for their next shot. The player can still pocket a ball to nominate a group on their next shot, however if no ball is pocketed the referee will take the first ball played as that player's nominated colour

group. If, however, on that next shot a foul is committed, the table remains open and the oncoming player continues with two visits and a free table (see rule 4e).

j) Combination shots are not allowed unless no colour has been nominated or all of the balls involved in the shot belong to that player's group (or unless rule 6b applies).

k) A player may not pocket one or more of their opponents object balls unless no colour has been nominated (or unless rule 6b applies).

5. FOULS

a) In off (cue ball pocketed).

b) Hitting opponents' balls before his/her own ball or balls except when rule 6b applies.

c) Failing to hit any ball with the cue ball.

d) 'Jump' shots – (defined as when the cue ball jumps over any part of any ball before making contact with any object ball).

e) If a player hits the 8 ball (black) with the cue ball on the first impact before all his/her own balls have been potted, except where rule 6b applies.

f) Potting any opponents balls except when rule 4i or 6b applies.

g) Ball off the table:-

- Any object ball or the 8 ball (black) shall be returned to the 8 ball spot (see 4a) or as near as possible to that spot without touching any other ball, in a direct line between that spot and the centre of the baulk line.
- If the cue ball, the ball to be played from any position on or behind the baulk line. A ball shall be deemed off the table if it comes to rest anywhere other than on the bed of the table.

h) If a players clothing or body should touch any ball.

i) Player not having at least one foot on the floor when shooting.

j) Playing or touching with the cue any ball other than the cue ball.

k) Playing out of turn.

l) Playing before balls have come to rest.

m) Playing before the ball or balls have been re-spotted.

n) Striking the cue ball with any part of the cue other than the tip.

o) Striking the cue ball with the cue more than once.

p) Push stroke (see 8a).

q) Moving an object ball or the 8 ball (black) when playing away from a touching ball.

r) Making contact with or moving any object ball or the 8 ball (black) when respotting a ball on the table.

s) A 'time foul' incurred in a frame of doubles where the nominated timer deems that the player in control has taken in excess of 60 seconds to take their shot.

6. PENALTY FOLLOWING ANY FOUL

a) Following any foul described under section 5, if the cue ball is on the bed of the table the oncoming player MUST play the cue ball from where it lies. If the cue ball has left the table (either pocketed or forced off the table bed), the oncoming player is entitled to place the cue ball anywhere on or behind the baulk line (see rule 8b then proceed as 6b) and can play their first shot in any direction. In each case the oncoming player is entitled to two visits (see also rule 6b).

Only in the case of a 'time foul' (rule 5s); the oncoming player may opt to lift the cue ball and play their next shot from anywhere behind the baulk line. See rule 11a.

b) Following any foul, the oncoming player's first shot is also classed as a 'free shot'. This entitles the player to play the cue ball directly onto any ball, including the opponents object balls and the 8 ball (black). However, the 8 ball (black) may not be pocketed, which would mean loss of the game, unless the player has already pocketed all of their own group of object balls and only needs to pocket the 8 ball (black) to win the game. (See also rule 6c).

c) A player is under no obligation to accept the free shot. They do not have to nominate their intention to play it unless no colour group has been nominated. If the player opts to take the free shot and pockets a ball from either colour group (not including the 8 ball (black)); they will still have two visits remaining.

d) Following the single free shot described in 6(b) the player will commence his/her normal visit.

e) If either player is on the black ball when the foul is committed, the two visits/free shot rule will still apply. This rule applies even if both players are shooting for the black ball.

f) If the cue ball or any other object ball is pocketed or forced off the table in the same shot that the 8 ball (black) is pocketed, then that player will lose the game.

g) If the 8 ball (black) or any other object ball is forced off the table during any shot, it should be replaced on the 8 ball (black) spot (or directly behind it if another ball is resting on it), and the oncoming player continues with 2 visits/free table. The cue ball will be played from where it lies unless that too has left the table (see rule 6a).

h) In all circumstances, the 8 ball (black) must be pocketed in its own shot in order to win the game. If a player has a 'free shot' as detailed in rules 6b & 6c; they may play an object ball on to the 8 ball (black) to pocket it, but they may not pocket the object ball AND the 8 ball (black) in the same shot.

7. LOSS OF GAME

- a) If a player pockets the 8 ball (black) before he/she pockets all the balls in his/her own group, he/she loses the game.
- b) A player going in off the 8 ball (black), or forcing the cue ball or any object ball off the table when the 8 ball (black) is pocketed, loses the game.
- c) A player pocketing additional balls when the 8 ball (black) is pocketed, loses the game. This includes in cases of a free table (see rule 6i).
- d) A player who clearly fails to make any attempt to play a ball of his/her own group will lose the game. In this case the referee must deem beyond reasonable doubt that no legitimate attempt has been made by the player to play at or for his/her own ball. If the player has made (or can justify) a reasonable attempt to play their own ball first then there should be no grounds for dispute.
- e) A player who has been deemed beyond all manner of doubt by the referee to have played any other kind of foul stroke (not detailed above) deliberately. (An example of this may include playing their own ball directly on to an opponent's ball with force to pocket it with the sole intention of clearing a pocket in order to gain an advantage).
- Due to the nature of the forfeiture around rules 7d & 7e, referees must deem beyond reasonable doubt that no legitimate attempt has been made by the player to avoid committing a foul stroke. If the referee wishes to award a frame under such circumstances they must do so under their own judgement without question from others. If the referee is in any doubt at all, the deliberate foul cannot be called.
- f) If a player seeks to gain advantage by deliberately touching a moving ball or retrieving a ball dropping into the pocket he/she shall lose the game.
- g) Any player deemed to gain or be shown an opportunity to advance in the game through coaching – please refer to rule 10.

8. GENERAL

- a) **PUSH STROKE** – defined as when the tip of the cue remains in contact with the cue ball once it has commenced its forward motion.
- b) **CUE BALL IN HAND** – when a player has the cue ball in hand he/she plays from any position on or behind the baulk line and in any direction.
- c) **PLAYER IN CONTROL** – A player is said to be in control of the table from the time that his/her body, cue or clothing touches the table prior to his/her shot, through his/her visit and up until his/her opponent does likewise prior to his/her visit. Any balls which fall into the pockets during this period (including the 8 ball (black)), he/she is said to have potted and he/she is liable to any penalties or benefits normally awarded to him/her for the potting of that ball or balls as are accorded to him/her in the rules of the game (rule 5c) applies). In all cases where the player in control has addressed the table, no other player (including that player's doubles partner) is allowed to make contact with the table, it will be deemed a foul stroke.
- d) The game is completed when the 8 ball (black) is potted in any pocket and all the remaining balls including the cue ball have come to rest, except where rule 4g or the rules detailed in section 7 apply.
- e) **TOUCHING BALL** – a player must play away from a touching ball (called by the referee) which **must not move** (see rule 5q). If the touching ball is one of the player's own group, he/she is deemed to have played that ball. If the touching ball is not one of his/her own group the cue ball must strike one of his/her own group. When rule 6b applies a player must play away from a touching ball and is deemed to have played that ball.
- f) A shot where the cue ball first contacts two adjacent balls simultaneously:
If only one of the two balls belongs to the player's colour group, the referee must make a call based on which ball he/she thinks the cue ball contacted first (a clue may be in the direction that both object balls move in after contact with the cue ball). The referee can only call a foul if they can be certain that the player's own ball was not contacted first. If there is any level of doubt the referee cannot call a foul. It may be necessary for the referee to explain to the players that the first contact was inconclusive.
- g) **THE 'D'** – Some tables in the Luton & District Monday Pool League have a 'D' drawn on them immediately behind the baulk line, whereas others do not. To allow for standardisation even if there is a 'D' present on the table any ball in hand situation is played from on or behind the baulk line. The 'D' is to be ignored. All rules lists drawn up for the Luton & District Monday Pool League are intended to reflect this rule.
- h) A ball must remain in a pocket to be deemed as pocketed. If a ball enters a pocket but subsequently returns back from the pocket on to the bed of the table, that ball is deemed as not pocketed. No penalty will be incurred and the ball should be played from where it comes to rest in any subsequent shots. Each pocket should be checked by the referee prior to each frame to ensure it is free of any obstruction or damage.

9. STALEMATE & RE-RACKS

There are two stalemate situations where a re-rack may be deemed necessary:

- Any situation where a legal shot cannot be played, whether the situation is arrived at by accident or design (see 9a).
- A situation where the referee deems that neither player is allowing the game to progress or a stalemate situation has arisen (see 9b).

a) If the game reaches a point where a legal shot cannot be played, the player at the table must indicate to the referee that he or she feels that a legal shot cannot be played in any way. It remains the duty of the player to request this. The referee will then confirm whether or not they are in agreement with the player. If necessary the referee may use a cue ball to verify the size of a gap (a spare cue ball is preferable, however if not available the cue ball from the match table may be used providing a suitable placeholder is set which allows the cue ball to be replaced in position afterwards*). After the referee has completed their assessment, they will either call a re-rack, or they will instruct the player at the table to continue with their visit.

* A re-rack can ONLY be called if there is no gap physically large enough for a cue ball to pass through. If the player's object ball can be reached through a gap, no matter how complicated an escape shot may be required to be, then a legal shot can still be played and no re-rack can be awarded.

b) If the game arrives at a point where neither player allowing the frame to progress (i.e. both players or sets of players are playing defensively and making no attempt to pocket balls); the referee may opt to call for a re-rack. Before resorting to this option, the referee should allow a minimum of three visits for each player or set of players. The referee then has the option of speaking to both players regarding the situation. If both players are in agreement, a re-rack can be called immediately. If there is a disagreement from one or both players, the referee can treat this as a warning, and allow the game to progress for a further three visits from each side to resolve the stalemate before calling a re-rack.

Where the outcome from rules 9a and 9b results in a re-rack, the table will be re-racked as at the start of the frame, with the break taken by the same player. No penalty will be incurred.

If a doubles shot clock is running at any time during the situations described in 9a and 9b, the referee must call 'time out' immediately and the timer must halt the shot clock immediately. The timer should remain paused until any discussion or investigation is concluded. If the referee opts for play to resume with no re-rack, he or she must call 'time running'. On that call the timer must resume the timer immediately, and the active player will resume their shot against the remaining time on the timer's watch.

10. COACHING

Instances of coaching are deemed as unsporting behaviour.

Rules and examples can be found under section 7.2 and 7.3 of the League Rules Manual.

11. DOUBLES FRAMES

a) Each doubles frame contested will be subject to a mandatory 60 second time limit on all shots. Timers on wristwatches or mobile telephones may be used.

- The nominated 'timer' should be selected from the opposite team to the referee.
- Each time the last moving ball has come to rest on the table (or the cue ball has been placed into baulk if respotted); the 60 seconds will commence.
- The timer should announce when 30 seconds are remaining, regardless of whether the player is shooting at that time.
- If 60 seconds elapses and no shot has been played, the timer should call a 'time foul'. The oncoming player is then entitled to two visits and a free table.
- Only if a 'time foul' has been called, the timer should commence the 60 seconds for the oncoming player immediately. The oncoming player then has the option of playing the cue ball from where it lies, or can ask the referee to replace the cue ball back into baulk. If the player wishes to have the cue ball placed back into baulk, they MUST ask the referee to lift the ball and replace it behind the baulk line (the referee can call a foul if the player lifts the cue ball themselves).
- If the player requests the referee to replace the cue ball behind the baulk line, the timer must restart the 60 seconds from the moment the referee respots the ball. The player can then play from anywhere on or behind the baulk line within those 60 seconds.
- If the referee is required to intervene during a shot (such as to assess the table for a possible re-rack as detailed in section 9, or a touching ball); the referee must call 'time out' which prompts the timer to stop (but not reset) the shot clock immediately. After the referee has completed their assessment and any relevant discussion has taken place with players, the referee must call 'time running'. At this point the timer must start the shot clock from that point, and the active player can resume their shot against the time remaining on the shot clock.
- During or after a 'time out', there is no obligation to disclose the amount of time remaining when the timer is restarted. 30 seconds should be called as normal, if applicable.

b) During a doubles game, conferring between partners is allowed only under the following circumstances:

- After the break shot has been played, if the same player is still in control of the table.
- Before a player's visit commences.

Players are not allowed to confer again between shots. Once the active player has made contact with the table (with their body, cue or clothing and whether by accident or design) no further conferring is allowed until the visit is over.

c) If contact is made with the table (either by the player's cue or part of their body or clothing) but no shot is played, returning or continuing to confer with his/her partner is not allowed. One verbal warning should be offered by the referee in the first instance, with any subsequent breach of this rule by the same players to then be deemed as a foul.

d) If contact is made with the table by any non-active player (including the active player's doubles partner) then that will be deemed as a foul.

12. GUIDANCE & TERMS EXPLAINED

- a) The term 'shot' means striking the ball once.
- b) The term 'visit' refers to one turn at the table comprising of one or a series of shots.
- c) The term 'break' refers to the first shot of the game or the first shot of a game being re-started.
- d) Coaching is deemed to be unsportsmanlike behaviour (see rule 10).
- e) A referee may, if requested, advise on the rules of the game, (consulting the competition rules if necessary).
- f) There is an obligation on the referee (and both players) to ensure the first player to pot a ball or balls belonging to a single colour group automatically nominates that group (see rules 4c and 4e).
- g) The referee should ensure that excessive time is not taken to play a shot and should act in accordance with competition rules or guidance (see rule 11a).
- h) Re-racks as in Rule 9 may be a reduced number of balls in accordance with competition rules or guidance.
- i) In Doubles matches once a player is in control of the table conversation with others including the partner is unsporting and shall be dealt with under competition rules (see rule 11).
- j) In a re-rack situation where no legal shot can be played (see rule 9), the first request should come from the player to ensure the referee is not deemed to be offering any influence/coaching to the player concerned.