

Barroom 8-Ball Rules (Based Upon IPT Rules)

Rules written in black letters with no highlighting are rules taken directly from IPT Rules.

Rules written in bold, red letters with yellow highlighting are rules that are different from IPT Rules that are in effect for all VFW Post 8561 Pool Tournaments.

These rules are subject to change at any time. It is the responsibility of the players to know and understand these rules before competing. The most important rule is have fun, be honest, and be respectful to the other players.

1.0 Object of the game of 8-ball

Eight-ball is a pocket billiard game played with 15 object balls and a cue ball. To win a game of 8-ball, a player must legally pocket the eight ball after which time his group of balls, either solids or stripes, is completely pocketed, or by pocketing the eight ball on a legal break shot.

2.0 Cue Stick Specifications

All cue sticks must meet the following specifications:

- a. No lighter than 15 ounces and no heavier than 25 ounces.
- b. Balance point at least 33" from the tip of the cue.

Referees may inspect any cue at any time.

3.0 The Lag

At the beginning of each match, the players will lag. The winner of the lag has the choice to break first, or to have the opponent break first. To lag, two balls are placed anywhere behind (one on each side of the long center line) the C line by the players. Each player shoots their respective balls to bank off of the opposite short rail and return to the shooters' side of the table. The winner of the lag is the player whose ball lands closest to the short rail on the end of the table from which the balls were lagged. Any of the following constitutes a foul on the lag resulting in the non-fouling player winning the lag: player's ball does not reach the opposite end rail; player's ball being pocketed; player's ball crosses the center line of the table that runs parallel to the long rails; a ball comes to rest in such a place that the center line through the ball which runs parallel to the long rails points to any part of the pocket- the center line must clearly point to a place on the nose of the cushion on the short rail. If both players foul on the lag, they will re lag.

4.0 Deciding Who Breaks

A coin toss before each game determines which team breaks and which team racks the balls.

5.0 Racking the Balls

The 15 balls are racked in a triangle shape with the foremost ball being the One Ball, which is to be placed on the A spot. The order of the balls should be random with the exception of the eight ball which should be placed in the middle of the third row, and the two back corner balls which should be a stripe and a solid respectively. Players are not allowed to place the remaining balls in any particular order for the purpose of gaining an advantage in the game. The opponent will rack the balls unless there is a designated referee who will be racking. Players must to the best of their ability rack the balls for their opponent. Players are not allowed to purposely rack the balls badly or improperly. When the opponent racks the balls, the player breaking can ask for a re rack or elect to rack the balls themselves. If a player racks for himself, the non-breaking player can ask for a re rack or call a referee. If racking problems cause a delay of game, a referee can determine who is responsible and deliver a delay of game penalty.

6.0 The Break

A legal break occurs when the One Ball is hit first and a) at least one object ball is pocketed or b) at least five object balls contact a rail. If a player fails to perform a legal break, the incoming player has the choice of cue ball in hand (with the original shooter on one foul), or having the balls re racked and being awarded the break (without the opponent being on one foul).

6.1 8-ball in on break - If the 8 ball is pocketed on a legal break shot it is a win of game. If the 8 ball is pocketed and the cue ball scratches or lands off the slate surface of the table, or any foul is committed, it is a loss of game.

6.2 Open table after break – **If no balls are made on the break**, the table is open. In an open table situation, any ball but the 8 ball can be hit first in any combination shot. Once solids or stripes are determined for a player, only their respective balls (solids or stripes) can be struck first in a combination shot. The 8 ball can be used in any combination shot, just not struck first.

***After break - If the breaker pockets any balls on the break, the breaker's group of balls (solids or stripes) is determined by the majority that person pocketed on the break**, if the same number of each is made, the table is still open. In an open table situation, any ball but the 8 ball can be hit first in any combination shot. Once solids or stripes are determined for a player, only their respective balls (solids or stripes) can be struck first in a combination shot. The 8 ball can be used in any combination shot, just not struck first.

6.3 Scratch or foul on break - If a player scratches or otherwise fouls on the break, the opponent **places the cue ball anywhere behind the Head Spot (known as the Break Box) for the next shot.**, or having the balls re racked and being awarded the break (without the opponent being on one foul).

6.4 Break Box - The cue ball must be placed anywhere behind the C-line and between the two non-center rail markers on the short rail. If the shooter jumps any object ball off the table it is a foul and the incoming player is awarded the choice explained in item 6.3. If the eight ball jumps the table on the break it is a loss of game for the breaker.

Rules Regarding the Break:

1. Make 8-ball on break and breaker does not scratch: game is won by the breaker immediately and is finished.
2. Make 8-ball on break and breaker scratches or cue ball leaves the table surface: game is lost by the breaker immediately and is finished.
3. No balls made on the break: open table for the next shooter.

4. Breaker makes one ball on the break and does not scratch: the type of ball made becomes the breaker's balls for that game (solids or stripes).

5. Breaker makes two balls on the break (one solid and one stripe) and does not scratch: table is still open.

6 Breaker makes two balls on the break (one solid and one stripe) and scratches: table is still open.

7. Breaker makes three or more balls on the break (some solids and some stripes) and does not scratch: the breaker's group of balls (solids or stripes) is determined by the majority the breaker made.

8. Breaker makes three or more balls on the break (some solids and some stripes) and scratches: table is still open.

7.0 Call Shot-

8-Ball is a called shot game. Called shot is defined as calling a legal object ball to be pocketed and the pocket in which it is to be pocketed. As long as a player shoots a legal shot (see 8.0) and the object ball called is pocketed in the called pocket, no matter how it gets there, the shot is good. Any extra balls that are pocketed in a legal shot stay pocketed.

Obvious shots need not be called, though if an opponent doesn't recognize the shot he retains the right to ask the shooter, before the shooter goes down on the shot, what ball and pocket are called. None of the following are considered obvious, even in their simplest forms: banks, kicks, combinations, masse, and jump shots. All of these shots need to be called.

Opponent has the right to ask the shooter which ball and pocket is being called if it is not clearly obvious. If a shot seems obvious, and the ball shot goes into another pocket and a dispute arises, a referee will make a final determination.

8.0 Legal Shot-

A legal shot after the break occurs when:

- a. The shooter pockets a legal called ball in the called pocket.
- b. The shooter's cue ball touches any numbered ball on the table, on an open table, with the exception of the eight ball, and drives either it or any other ball after contact, or the cue ball to a rail.
- c. The shooter's cue ball touches a numbered ball that corresponds with the shooter's ball group (solids or stripes), once determined, before hitting any other ball, and driving any ball or the cue ball to a rail thereafter, or pocketing any ball except the eight ball (unless player is on the eight ball).
- d. If an object ball is frozen to a rail and is the intended ball on which to make a legal hit, the cue ball must either strike a rail after making contact with the frozen ball, or the frozen ball must contact a different rail.

Any failure to perform a legal shot is a foul and **the shooter's turn has ended and the next shot is awarded to the non-shooting opponent with the cue ball remaining in place.**

9.0 Playing-

A player continues to play until he fails to pocket a ball that corresponds to his ball group (or any numbered ball but the eight on an open table) or the eight ball once his ball group has been completely pocketed, or until a foul has been committed. A player is allowed to call a **"Safe Shot"** and by doing so is allowed to pocket a ball that corresponds to his ball group while legally ending the inning.

10.0 Jump Shots-

It is legal to cause the cue ball to leave the surface of the table by elevating the butt of the cue and, with a downward stroke, force the cue ball to rise off the playing surface. For the shot to be legal only the cue tip may touch the cue ball—the shot must not be "scooped" by the ferrule or shaft. Any miscue on a jump shot is a foul. A legal jump cue must be at least 40 inches in length and constructed in typical cue fashion.

11.0 End of Inning-

If a player fails to pocket a ball on a legal shot, that player's inning ends and the opponent takes the table where the balls lie. If it is a foul that ends the player's inning, the incoming player **has the next shot.**

12.0 Fouls-

The following are fouls:

- a. All ball fouls- if a player touches any ball in any way other than a legal stroke; any touching of the cue ball with a mechanical bridge, body part, piece of clothing, chalk, or anything related to the shooter. If the front of the cue tip touches the ball, such as in a shooting posture, it is a foul. **After a ball foul has been committed, the cue ball is left in place by the player that fouled and the next shot is given to the opponent.**
- b. Cue ball scratches or comes to rest off the slate surface. **After a cue ball scratch has been committed, the cue ball is placed in the Break Box by the opponent of the player that fouled and the next shot is given to that non-fouling opponent.**
- c. Any intentional moving, striking, disrupting, of any ball on the table at any time using any body part, element or device. **After a foul such as this has been committed, the cue ball is given "Ball in Hand" to the non-fouling opponent for the next shot.**
- d. **Any intentional scratch or foul done in an effort to improve the shooter's position or to put the opponent in a positional disadvantage is a foul and, as a result of such, the cue ball is given "Ball in Hand" to the non-fouling opponent for the next shot.**

e. On any player's shot, one of four situations must occur in order to avoid a foul that ends the shooter's turn:

1.) The shooter pockets the called ball.

2.) The shooter hits one his team's object balls (solids or stripes) first and at least one of his team's object balls hits a rail afterwards.

3.) The shooter hits one his team's object balls (solids or stripes) first and the cue ball hits a rail afterwards.

4.) The shooter hits the cue ball into a rail, which makes contact with one his team's object balls (solids or stripes) first after the cue ball carom off the rail (a legal bank shot).

13.0 Winning a Game-

A player wins a game by legally pocketing the eight ball after which time all the balls of his corresponding ball group have been pocketed, or by legally pocketing the eight on the break.

14.0 Losing a Game-

A player loses a game by committing any foul on a shot that results in the eight ball being pocketed (see 15 for guidelines on playing the eight ball), jumping the eight off the table (comes to rest off the slate bed surface) at any time, pocketing the eight ball prematurely, pocketing the eight ball in a pocket other than the called pocket. Player also loses game by committing three consecutive fouls.

15.0 Playing the Eight Ball

When playing the eight ball:

a. The eight ball must always be the first ball contacted by the cue ball, and it or any other ball including the cue ball must contact a rail after the initial hit. Failure to do this is a foul and the opponent is awarded **the next shot**; it is not a loss of game.

b. **The eight ball must be pocketed cleanly (no combinations) and the eight ball must be pocketed exactly as the shooter has called it to be pocketed regarding single or multiple banks all called before the shot.** Kisses on the eight ball shot are legal, allowable and need not be called.

c. Pocketing the eight in the wrong pocket is a loss of game.

d. If a player scratches or jumps the cue ball so that it comes to rest off the playing surface of the table while playing the eight ball, it is a loss of game. Not making a legal hit on the eight ball, but leaving the cue ball on the table, is a foul **and the opponent is awarded the next shot**. It is not an automatic loss of game.

16.0 Illegally Pocketed Balls-

All balls that are illegally pocketed or jumped off the table stay "down," with the exception of the eight ball which results in a loss of game for the shooter.

17.0 Slow Play-

From time to time throughout a match, referees will spot check to make sure that match play is moving along at an acceptable rate. If the referee determines that match play is going too slowly, the referee may issue a warning to speed up play to both players, or to the player the referee believes is responsible for the slow play. There is no shot clock. The absence of a shot clock is not an excuse to play too slowly. If the referee issues a warning, it is the players' responsibility to speed up play immediately. If one or both players are on the verge of winning the match, the referee will exercise restraint unless a player is playing absurdly slow or with the intention of distracting the opponent.

18.0 Referees-

Referees are an integral part of any professional sport. In a situation where a referee presides over several tables, it is the players' responsibility to call a referee to a table to watch a shot or make a determination. The shooter or the opponent has the right to call a referee. If the opponent calls for a referee, it must be done before the shooter goes down on the shot (if shooter plays quickly, then opponent must act quickly). If the shooter ignores the call for a referee it is a foul. Since many languages are spoken by IPT players, it is best to call out "referee please." Referees' decisions on shot calls, dispute resolution, or anything within the jurisdiction of the referee are final. If either player feels as though the referee has made the wrong decision, the player(s) has the right to ask that the call be reviewed by the Tour Director, or appointed Tournament Director (if any). The review will consist of the Director asking each of the players for their opinion, as well as the referee's opinion, and the opinion of anyone the Director believes could add insight to the situation. After review, the Director will make a final determination. After such a final determination is made, any arguing or derogatory remarks toward an opponent, referee, witness, or Director, may result in a one game penalty for each infraction and is at the discretion of the Director. If the Director is unavailable or recuses himself from the situation, another referee shall take the position of a substitute Director and retains all directorial power for that specific situation. Referees also have appointed responsibilities where they require no invitation to preside over a game.

19.0 Conduct Unbecoming a Sportsman-

While a competitive sport, billiard games are noted for their superior level of sportsman-like conduct. In the event a competitor exhibits behavior that is unacceptable for an IPT Touring Professional, a referee (whether called over or witnessed an event independently) will issue one warning. If behavior continues, the referee will issue a one game penalty for each infraction, or issue a disqualification with the concurrence of the Director or another referee in the absence of a Director. The following are some examples of potential infractions:

- a. Sharking- defined as intentionally trying to distract your opponent which can include trying to intimidate opponent either verbally or through gesture.
- b. Player's Chair- players are required to be seated in a designated player's chair during the opponent's turn at the table. At the end of an inning, the outgoing player should go directly to the chair and remain there until the incoming player's inning has ended.
- c. Intimidation- defined as the act of threatening a player, spectator, referee, or anyone verbally or through gesture.
- d. Mouting Off- players are expected to be quiet when opponent is playing. Any derogatory comments to a player, referee, spectator, or anyone is a violation.
- e. Dumping- defined as fixing the outcome of the game. Can result in instant disqualification from tournament.
- f. Any action deemed, by a referee or Director, unbecoming a sportsman.
- g. Players are required to call fouls on themselves when they know that they have committed a foul.

20.0 Timeouts-

Players are allowed one time out per match which can only be taken during player's own inning unless mutually agreed on by both players. Timeouts should last no more than five minutes. If player is gone for an extended period of time, opponent should consult a referee.

21.0 Use of Equipment-

Equipment can only be used in the manner in which they were designed to be used.

22.0 Not Ready to Shoot-

If the player whose turn it is at the table is not there to approach the table, a referee should be called. **A maximum temporary timeout of five minutes will be called by the referee. If play is not legally resumed within five minutes, the player(s) not ready to shoot will forfeit the game.**

23.0 Inadvertent Disturbing of a Ball-

If a player unintentionally and inadvertently disturbs the position of a ball (or balls), the disturbed ball(s) will be returned as close to their original position as possible with no foul. The player that has disturbed the balls will ask the members of the opposing team if they are satisfied with the repositioning of the disturbed ball(s). If the opposing team members are agreeable to the repositioning of the disturbed ball(s), then play continues. If the opposing team members disagree with the repositioning of the disturbed ball(s), they will direct the player repositioning the balls as to their recollection of the proper spot for each disturbed ball being repositioned to their pre-disturbed position. Once the repositioning is agreed to by all, the match continues with no foul. The inadvertent disturbing of ball(s) is most common during these situations:

- a. A player is assessing the situation on the table prior to shooting and inadvertently touches and moves a ball (or balls) with the hand, arm or pool cue.
- b. A player is positioning his hand on the table (or positioning the bridge) in order to attempt his next shot and inadvertently touches and moves a ball (or balls) with the hand, arm, bridge or pool cue.
- c. A player has just executed a shot and inadvertently touches and moves a ball (or balls) with the hand, arm, bridge or pool cue.

24.0 Shooting Out of Turn-

- a. Any player shooting out of turn has committed a foul, but said foul does not cause the automatic loss of the game.
- b. The balls shall be replaced as close to their original positions as possible prior to the "shooter out of turn" event, even if it means placing quarters into the pool table in order to regain any balls made during the "shooter out of turn" event. Once the balls are placed as close to the original positions as possible (prior to the "shooter out of turn" event) and both teams agree that the replacement of the balls is acceptable, play resumes starting with the next shooter on the team that did not have one of its members shoot out of turn.

25.0 Late for a Match-

If a player is late for a scheduled match, the player forfeits the match. If a player is known to be at the tournament site, but not at the table for a scheduled match, opponent should call a referee at which time rule 23.0 will be exercised. If both players are late for a scheduled match, both will forfeit the match and it will count as a loss for both players (in the statistics, it will be recorded as a 0-8 loss for both players, which will adversely affect the player on the Money List rankings). If a player is already guaranteed to advance to the next round, even with a match remaining, if the player fails to play that match the player risks forfeiture from the tournament, or Tour Card.