

Official IPT Rules

These rules are for the game of 8-Ball played at all IPT tour events. 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 and fans.

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 shorter than 53" and no longer than 63"
- b. No lighter than 15 ounces and no heavier than 25 ounces.
- c. Balance point at least 33" from the tip of the cue.
- d. Leather cue tip.

Referees or IPT officials may inspect any cue at any time. If a cue that does not meet specifications is found being used by a player it will result in an immediate loss of a game or more depending on the magnitude of the offense.

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 Winner Option to Break

After the first break, the winner of each game has the option to break for the next game or to have the opponent break.

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 - Regardless of how many solids or striped balls are made on the break, the table is open after the break. 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.

* There is an adjustment to the rules for all IPT Challenge Matches listed below

***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 they made, 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 has ball in hand (with the original shooter on one foul), or having the balls re raked 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.

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 shooters 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 cue ball in hand is awarded to the incoming player.

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 "Safety" 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-

Jump shots are legal as long as the cue ball is not struck under the center line that is parallel to the surface of the table.

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 is awarded cue ball in hand.

12.0 Fouls-

All fouls result in the opponent of the player who committed the foul being awarded cue ball in hand. 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. The only exception to this rule is when a player has Ball in Hand, in which case it is legal to position the ball with the cue. If the front of the cue tip touches the ball, such as in a shooting posture, it is a foul.

b. Cue ball scratches or comes to rest off the slate surface.

c. Any intentional moving, striking, disrupting, of any ball on the table at any time using any body part, element or device.

d. Marking the table in any way with a piece of chalk or any other method.

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 cue ball in hand; it is not a loss of game.

b. Combinations, caroms, kisses, are all legal as long as the eight ball is the first ball contacted by the cue ball.

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 Ball in Hand foul- 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 a single player is warned and fails to speed up play to an acceptable rate, the referee can issue a one game penalty. If both players continue to play too slowly, the referee can issue a one game penalty to both players, essentially bringing the match closer to completion. 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 Sportsperson-

While a competitive sport, billiard games are noted for their superior level of sportsperson-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. Mouthing 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. Coaching- players are allowed to have one "cornerman" for coaching and support. However, discussions with the "cornerman" should not be disruptive to the opponent while shooting. Cornermen must adhere to the player dress code. Once a player has left his seat to start his inning he may not get coaching from the cornerman or anyone else. Players should be aware that excessive coaching or discussion with the cornerman could put the player in jeopardy of a slow-play penalty.

- f. Dumping- defined as fixing the outcome of the game. Can result in instant disqualification from tournament and/or suspension or loss of Tour Card.

- g. Any action deemed, by a referee or Director, unbecoming a sportsperson.

- h. 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 Dress Code- (addendum)

Players who are not up to code may be issued a warning by the Director or asked to change clothing.

23.0 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. For each two minute interval that a player is gone from the table, the referee will issue a penalty by awarding a game to the player who is present. If a player fails to return to the table on a time-out, the opponent shall alert the referee who may begin timing the player to invoke this rule after a reasonable amount of time has transpired to ensure that the player receives his full five minute time-out.

24.0 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.

25.0 Scorekeeping

It is each player's responsibility to turn in a score card, signed by both players, immediately after a match to the tournament direction table. Failing to turn in a score card can result in a forfeit for the non-recorded game.

26.0 Intoxication-

If the referee and / or Tournament or Tour Director deems that a player is drunk, high on drugs, or in any way intoxicated or impaired by a legal or illegal substance, the player will be disqualified from the tournament.