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World 8 Ball Pool Rules

OFFICIAL RULES OF THE WORLD EIGHTBALL POOL FEDERATION

The Governing Body for Eightball Pool



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A. The Spirit of the Game

The Game is known as Eight-Ball Pool. It is expected that players will always play the game in the true spirit and in a sporting manner. The Referee will take whatever action is necessary to ensure that the spirit and rules of the game are observed.

C. (9) Player in Control

A player (and the player's partner in doubles) is deemed to be "In Control" of the frame from the time that the balls stop moving from the final shot of an opponent's turn until the balls stop moving from the final shot of the player's turn. There can be no instance, once a frame has commenced, that someone is not in control.

D. Object of the Game

- The object of the game is to win by being the first player to Pot a group of Colours in any order and in any pockets and then Pot the Eight-Ball in any pocket.
- When "On" a group of Colours, potting more than one ball of that Colour in the same shot is allowed. But a separate shot must be played to pot the Eight-Ball and win the game.

E. Playing from Baulk

- "Baulk" is the area of the table behind the Baulk Line at that end of the table.
- When playing from Baulk:
 - The centre point of the Cue Ball must be behind the Baulk Line.
 - The Cue Ball can be moved into position by hand or with the shaft of the cue. NOT Cue Tip.
 - The Cue Ball may be played in any direction.

F. The Break

- The balls are racked as per diagram with the Eight-Ball on the spot.
- In the absence of any competition / tournament rules to the contrary, a coin will be tossed or players will 'lag', to determine which player will break.

Rules for the 'lag'

Each player should use balls of equal size and weight.

These should be the only two balls on the table. With the balls in baulk, one player to the left the other to the right of the table, the balls are struck simultaneously to the foot cushion and back to the baulk end of the table. The player whose ball is the closest to the innermost edge of the baulk cushion wins the lag.

The lagged ball must contact the foot cushion at least once. Other cushion contacts are immaterial, except as prohibited below.

It is an automatic loss of the lag if:

- The ball crosses into the opponent's half of the table.
- The ball fails to contact the foot cushion.
- The ball drops into a pocket.
- The ball jumps the table.
- The ball touches the long cushion.
- The ball rests within the corner pocket and past the nose of the head cushion, or
- The ball contacts the foot cushion more than once.

If both players violate automatic-loss lag rules, or if the referee is unable to determine which ball is closer, the lag is a tie and is replayed.

If one player strikes the ball, the other player has to strike his ball before the opponent's ball reaches the foot cushion in order to have a simultaneous lag. If this is not the case and the referee feels that the player who played second wanted to get an advantage out of that, then the lag has to be replayed.

- To "Break", the Cue Ball is played at the triangle of Object Balls from Baulk. The frame commences the instant that the Cue Ball is played.
- The Break will be deemed a "Fair Break" if:
 - At least one Colour is potted

AND/OR

- Four Object Balls (at least) are driven to a cushion.
- If the Break is not a Fair Break it is a Non-Standard Foul **AND**:
 - The opponent is awarded two visits.
 - The balls are re-racked.
 - The opponent re-starts the game and is under the same obligation to achieve a Fair Break.
- If the Cue Ball is potted on a Fair Break it is a Non-Standard Foul that is penalised by the turn passing to the opponent.
 - If the break is not a Fair Break and the Cue Ball is potted, the penalty for failure to perform a Fair Break applies.
- If the Eight-Ball is potted on any break, the balls are re-racked and the same player will break again. When the Eight-Ball is potted on the break, all other aspects of the shot are ignored. (Except if a breach of the "Spirit of the Game" occurs).
- Where the wrong player performs the break, if:
 - The break is fair, the opponent will continue with 2 visits and an open table.
 - The break is not a Fair Break, see 4(b) above.

G. Legal Shot

- On all shots, the player must-
 - Cause the Cue Ball's initial contact with a ball to be with a ball "On", **AND THEN**
 - Pot a ball "On" **OR** Cause the Cue Ball or any Object Ball to contact a cushion.
- Failure to play a Legal Shot is a Standard Foul.
- EXCEPTIONS**
 - On the Break, the conditions of a Legal Shot do not apply. [See (F) The Break].
 - When playing out of a **Total Snooker** a player is only obliged to meet the conditions of (1a) above.
 - Definition: A player is in a Total Snooker when it is impossible to play any part of any of the player's own Colour by way of a "straight line" shot. Leaving an opponent in a Total Snooker is not a foul.

- If a player believes that a Total Snooker exists, the player may ask the referee for a ruling.
- If the referee rules that a Total Snooker exists, the player's obligations under the "Legal Shot" rule are relaxed as follows:- The player need only cause the Cue Ball's initial contact to be with a ball "On". The requirement to pot a ball and / or cause a ball to strike a cushion is waived.
- In a Total Snooker, the straight sections of the cushions DO come into consideration. If a player has to strike a cushion prior to impact with a "ball on", then a "Total Snooker" does exist.

H. Deciding Colours

- If the Cue Ball's initial contact is with an Object Ball that is touching a cushion, simply forcing that Object Ball into the same cushion does not constitute a Legal Shot.
- If the Cue Ball and an Object Ball are touching the same cushion, simply forcing the Cue Ball and / or that Object Ball into the same cushion does not constitute a Legal Shot.

I. Time Allowed

- GENERAL**
 - When Colours have not been decided the table is deemed to be "Open". When the table is open a player may play at either group of Colours.
 - Colours can never be decided on a foul shot.
 - Once Colours are decided, the player remains "On" that coloured group for the duration of the frame.
 - Playing a shot after neglecting to nominate a choice of Colours is a Standard Foul. Any balls potted on such a shot are left in the pocket and ignored for the purpose of deciding Colours.
- ON THE BREAK**
 - If no Colours are potted on the break the table is "Open".
 - If one or more Colours are potted on the break the player then has a right and obligation to verbally advise the referee of a choice of Colour before proceeding. Failure to do so is a Standard Foul.
 - If the player nominates a Colour that was potted on the break, the player is on that colour no matter what happens next.
 - If the player nominates a Colour that was not potted on the break, to be on that Colour, the player must pot a ball of that Colour on the next shot.
- AFTER THE BREAK**
 - If a player pots one or more balls of the same Colour, the player is then "On" that Colour.
 - If a player pots one or more balls of different Colours, the player must verbally advise the referee of a choice of Colour before proceeding. Failure to do so is a Standard Foul.

J. Fouls

There are three types of foul. Standard Fouls, Non-Standard Fouls, and Loss of Frame Fouls. A player can only be penalised for one foul at a time. If two or more fouls are committed during a shot, the foul that carries the most severe penalty will apply.

K. Standard Fouls

- Are to be called by the referee as soon as they occur and the fouled player is in control, until all balls from that shot come to rest. The referee then awards two visits to the opponent.**
- Potting the Cue Ball - "In Off" (Except on a Fair Break).
 - Playing from outside Baulk when obliged to play from Baulk.
 - Potting an opponent's ball. (Except, when it is the properly nominated ball following a Foul Snooker or Foul Jaw Snooker).
 - Playing out of turn. (A player who plays a shot immediately after playing a foul or immediately after the referee has called a foul on that player, has played out of turn).
 - Accidentally striking the Cue Ball with any part of the cue.
 - Accidentally striking an Object Ball with any part of the cue.
 - Playing a shot before all balls have come to rest from the previous shot.
 - Playing a shot before any balls that require spotting, have been spotted.
 - Touching the table while having a cigarette (lit or unlit) in hand or mouth.
 - Causing a cigarette (lit or unlit) to touch the table or enter the space directly above the table.
 - Touching the table while having a beverage container in hand.
 - Causing a beverage container or beverage to touch the table or enter the space directly above the table.
 - Touching the table when not in control of the frame.
 - Not moving away from the table within 10 seconds of the time that all the balls stopped moving from the final shot of a turn at the table.
 - Coaching: - During a frame, a player is required to play without receiving any advice from other persons relating to the playing of the frame. Should a team member or bone-fide supporter of a player offer advice, the referee will issue a "First and Final Warning" to that person, or persons, that a repetition will result in the player being penalised via a Standard Foul.
 - Leaving the playing area without permission.
 - Playing a shot after neglecting to nominate a choice of Colour when required to do so. [See Deciding Colours 1.(d)]
 - Playing A Push Shot or Double Hit.
 - Failing to perform a "Legal Shot".
 - After being awarded a Foul Snooker or Foul Jaw Snooker: - Playing an opponent's ball or the Eight Ball without firstly nominating that ball.
 - Playing a shot while not having at least one foot touching the floor.

- Failing to "Play Away" from a touching ball.
- A ball remaining off the table.
- Players' body or clothing touching any ball.
- Jump shot, (If the Cue ball leaves the bed of the table and misses an Object ball that would have struck had the Cue Ball not left the table on an otherwise identical shot, the Cue Ball is deemed to have jumped over that object ball). A break shot that results in the pack being jumped will be deemed to be not a Fair Break (see 4b).

L. Non-Standard Fouls

are to be called by the referee as soon as they occur and the fouled player is in control, until all balls from that shot come to rest. The referee will then impose the relevant penalty.

- Failure to perform a Fair Break. [See The Break (4a & 4b)].
- Failure to play a shot within 60 seconds of the time that the balls came to rest from the previous shot. [See (I) Time Allowed (3)].
- Potting the cue ball on a fair break. [See The Break (4c)(1)].

M. Loss of Frame Fouls

- Committing a foul in the same shot that the Eight Ball is potted. (EXCEPT on the Break).
- Potting the Eight Ball when a ball or balls of the player's own Colour are still on the table. (EXCEPT on the Break).
- Potting the Eight Ball and the last ball or balls of the player's own Colour in the same shot.
- Deliberately striking a ball other than the Cue Ball with the tip of the cue.
- Deliberately causing any ball or balls to be moved in a manner other than that which may result from playing a normal shot.
- Deliberately striking the Cue Ball with other than the tip of the cue.
- Deliberately interfering, by word or action, so as to disrupt an opponent's play.
- If a player breaches the 'Spirit of the Game' to such an extent that the frame (or match) should be awarded to the opponent.

N. Push Shots and Double Hits

- DEFINITIONS:** Generally, any shot played with speed will not be deemed to be a Push Shot regardless of the fact that the cue tip may have come into contact with the Cue Ball more than once.
- EXCEPTIONS that are Standard Fouls:-**
 - When, during the playing of a shot, the tip of the cue strikes the Cue Ball twice and the referee is able to actually see each contact.
 - When, during the playing of a shot, a player plays the cue so slowly through the Cue Ball that the cue tip remains in contact with the Cue Ball so as to be visibly pushing it along.
 - When the Cue Ball is played into a touching Object Ball.

O. Snookers [For Total Snooker refer to Rule G 'Legal Shot' part 3 (b)]

- DEFINITION:** A player is "Snookered" when it is impossible to play the finest cut possible on both sides of any of that player's own Colour by way of a "straight - line" shot.
- A player cannot be Snookered by a ball of the player's own Colour. That is, if one of the player's own coloured group is an obstructing ball, it will be ignored for the purposes of determining a Snooker.
- A player cannot be Snookered on an Object Ball if the Cue Ball is touching that Object Ball.
- A player cannot be Snookered by the straight sections of the cushions. If a straight section of a cushion is preventing the finest possible cut on the side of an Object Ball, that section of cushion will be deemed not to exist for the purposes of determining a Snooker on that Object Ball.
- If an Object Ball is partly obscured by a curved section of a cushion (Jaw), this in itself does not constitute a Snooker.

P. Foul Snookers

- DEFINITION:** When a foul occurs, and this results in the incoming player being Snookered, the incoming player is deemed to be Foul Snookered.
- If a player believes that a Foul Snooker exists, the player may ask the referee for a ruling.
- If the referee rules that a foul snooker exists, the player initially has the following options:
 - Play the Cue Ball from where it lies. [see (4a) below] **OR**
 - Ask the referee to remove the Cue Ball so as to allow the player to play from Baulk. [see (4b) below].
- If the player chooses to play the Cue Ball from where it lies, the player may nominate the Eight Ball (but see (5) below) or any one of the opponent's Colour. The player can nominate a particular ball by verbal description of it or its position or by pointing at it.
 - Once nominated, a ball is deemed to 'become one' of the player's Colour for the first shot of the first visit. The player may then play any of the player's own Colour or the nominated ball. If any of the player's Colour and/or the nominated ball is potted, the player continues with the first visit.
 - If the player chooses to play the Cue Ball from Baulk, a Foul Snooker may no longer exist. If the referee decides that a Foul Snooker does still exist, the player may nominate a ball and follow the procedure in (4a) above.
- If the Eight Ball is nominated it may be played, but potting it will mean loss of frame.
- If a player is "On" the Eight Ball and Foul Snookered: - The player may play a nominated ball or the Eight Ball and pot either or both of these balls, directly or indirectly, in any pocket or pockets. Assuming the player does not commit a foul:-
 - If neither the Eight Ball nor the nominated ball is potted, the player's first visit is complete.
 - If the nominated ball is potted and the Eight Ball is not, the player continues with the first visit.
 - If the nominated ball and the Eight Ball are potted, the player wins the frame.
 - If the Eight Ball is potted and the nominated ball is not, the player wins the frame.
- If a Foul Snooker exists and the Cue Ball is touching an opponent's ball or balls, the player may, but is not obliged to, nominate one of those touching balls.

Q. Foul Jaw Snooker

If an opponent fouls and the Cue Ball comes to rest on or near a Jaw (curved part of a cushion), and that Jaw is preventing the player from playing the finest cut possible on both sides of any of that player's own Colour by way of a "straight - line" shot, the player is deemed to be Foul Snookered and all the rules pertaining to Foul Snookers will apply.

R. Touching Balls

- GENERAL**
 - If the Cue Ball is touching an Object Ball, the player is obliged to "Play Away" from that Object Ball at an angle of more than 90 degrees. (That is, play the shot without causing the Cue Ball to make any initial further contact with that Object Ball).
 - If, when playing away from a touching ball, the touching ball rocks or moves without being contacted further, but simply because the Cue Ball is no longer there, no penalty will apply.
- Playing away from two or more touching Object Balls: - If any of the touching Object Balls are of the player's Colour, the player will be deemed to have played away if the player plays away from any one of the touching balls of the player's Colour. That is, the player may play into any of the other touching balls. The player needs then to only pot a ball or cause any ball to strike a cushion to fulfil the requirements of a Legal Shot.

S. Balls Off the Table

- It is a Standard Foul if a ball leaves the playing surface (other than being potted) and remains off the playing surface or doesn't return by its own means.
- DEFINITIONS / EXAMPLES**
 - "Playing Surface" - The Playing Surface of the table is the flat part of the table between the cushions.
 - "By its own means" -
 - It is not a foul if a ball leaves the playing surface, runs along the top of a cushion, drops back on to the playing surface and comes to rest there or falls into a pocket.
 - It is a Standard Foul if a ball leaves the playing surface, comes into contact with a person or object that is not a part of the table and then returns to the playing surface.
 - "Off the Table" - It is a Standard Foul if a ball leaves the playing surface, and comes to rest on other than the playing surface (eg. On the floor or on the top of a cushion).
 - "Spotted" - A ball is spotted when its centre point is placed on the spot or, if this is not possible, as near as possible to the spot in a direct line between the spot and the centre point of the cushion that lies the greatest distance from the Baulk Line. If this is not possible, as near as possible to the spot, in a direct line between the spot and the centre point of the baulk line. If any of the following balls require spotting, they are spotted in the following order-
 - Eight-Ball, then Red Balls then Yellow Balls,
 - Eight-Ball, then Numbered Balls in numerical order.
- If a ball leaves the playing surface and remains off the playing surface, it shall be returned to the table:-
 - If it is the Cue Ball it is to be played from Baulk.
 - If it is an Object Ball (or Balls) it is to be Spotted.

T. Balls Falling Without Being Hit

- Any ball that falls into a pocket at any time, without being struck, shall be replaced by the Referee to its original position, no penalty. Time will be re-started and the player in control continues with the visit.
- Should any ball fall into the pocket after a shot is played and before balls come to rest, providing the fallen ball played no part in the shot, once all other balls have stopped moving, it shall be replaced as described above.
 - If a legal pot was made play continues with the same visit.
 - If no pot was made play continues with the next visit.
 - If a foul was made then the next player will continue with the appropriate penalty.
- Should any ball fall into the pocket after a shot is played, but before balls come to rest, and the fallen ball would have been struck, then the Referee will replace all balls to their original positions.
 - If no infringements of the rules were committed during the shot, or the Cue Ball is potted as a result of a ball falling that the cue ball would otherwise hit, the player who played will replay the shot or may play a different shot.
 - If any foul was committed (other than as defined in (a) above) then the next player will continue with the appropriate penalty.

U. Interference

- If any balls are moved during a frame:
 - By a person other than the players taking part in the frame **OR**
 - As a direct result of one of the players being bumped **OR**
 - Due to any other event deemed outside the players' control such as:
 - 'Act of God' such as an earthquake etc.
 - Tip falling off a cue or end falling off a spider etc.
- the referee will replace the balls as near as possible to the positions they were in before the incident occurred, no penalty shall be imposed on either of the players and the frame shall continue.

V. Impossible Shot

A situation may arise during a frame where it is impossible for a player to play a shot without fouling. In such a situation the player has no other option but to commit a foul.

W. Stalemate

The referee shall declare a Stalemate if both the player and the opponent have three turns in succession where the Cue Ball fails to make contact with an Object Ball. In such a case, the frame will be replayed with the same player breaking.

X. Referees Guidance (See separate sheet).