

Eight Ball Rules

Eight ball is played with fifteen numbered object balls and the cue ball. The shooter's group of seven balls (one through seven or nine through fifteen) must all be off the table before he attempts to pocket the eight ball to win. Shots are called.

1 Determining First Break

The player winning the lag has the option to determine who has to execute the first break shot. The standard format is alternate break.

2. Eight Ball Rack

The fifteen object balls are racked as tightly as possible in a triangle, with the apex ball on the foot spot and the eight ball as the first ball that is directly below the apex ball. One from each group of seven will be on the two lower corners of the triangle. The other balls are placed in the triangle without purposeful or intentional pattern.

3. Break Shot

The following rules apply to the break shot:

- (a) The cue ball begins in hand behind the head string.
- (b) No ball is called, and the cue ball is not required to hit any particular object ball first.
- (c) If the breaker pockets a ball and does not foul, he continues at the table, and the table remains open.
- (d) If no object ball is pocketed, at least four object balls must be driven to one or more rails, or the shot results in an illegal break, and the incoming player has the option of
 - (1) accepting the table in position, or
 - (2) re-racking and breaking, or
 - (3) re-racking and allowing the offending player to break again.
- (e) Pocketing the eight ball on a legal break shot is not a foul. If the eight ball is pocketed, the breaker has the option of
 - (1) re-spotting the eight ball and accepting the balls in position, or
 - (2) re-breaking.
- (f) If the breaker pockets the eight ball and scratches, the opponent has the option of
 - (1) re-spotting the eight ball and shooting with cue ball in hand behind the head string; or
 - (2) re-breaking.

(g) If any object ball is driven off the table on a break shot, it is a foul; such balls remain out of play (except the eight ball which is re-spotted); and the incoming player has the option of

(1) accepting the table in position, or

(2) taking cue ball in hand behind the head string.

(h) If the breaker fouls in any manner not listed above, the following player has the option of

(1) accepting the balls in position, or

(2) taking cue ball in hand behind the head string.

4. Open Table / Choosing Groups

Before groups are determined, the table is said to be "open," and before each shot, the shooter must call his intended ball. If the shooter legally pockets his called ball, the corresponding group becomes his, and his opponent is assigned the other group. If he fails to legally pocket his called ball, the table remains open and play passes to the other player. When the table is "open", any object ball may be struck first except the eight ball.

5. Continuing Play

The shooter remains at the table as long as he continues to legally pocket called balls, or he wins the rack by pocketing the eight ball.

6. Shots Required to Be Called

On each shot except the break, shots must be called as explained in 1.6 Standard Call Shot. The eight ball may be called only after the shot on which the shooter's group has been cleared from the table. The shooter may call "safety" in which case play passes to the opponent at the end of the shot and any object ball pocketed on the safety remains pocketed.

7. Spotting Balls

If the eight ball is pocketed or driven off the table on the break, it will be spotted or the balls will be re-racked. No other object ball is ever spotted.

8. Losing the Rack

The shooter loses if he

(a) fouls when pocketing the eight ball;

- (b) pockets the eight ball before his group is cleared;
- (c) pockets the eight ball in an uncalled pocket; or
- (d) drives the eight ball off the table. These do not apply to the break shot.

9. Standard Fouls

If the shooter commits a foul, play passes to his opponent. The cue ball is in hand, and the incoming player may place it anywhere on the playing surface. The following are standard fouls at eight ball:

- (1) Cue Ball Scratch or off the Table
- (2) Wrong Ball First; The first ball contacted by the cue ball on each shot must belong to the shooter's group, except when the table is open.
- (3) No Rail after Contact
- (4) No Foot on Floor
- (5) Ball Driven off the Table
- (6) Touched Ball
- (7) Double Hit / Frozen Balls
- (8) Push Shot
- (9) Balls Still Moving
- (10) Bad Cue Ball Placement
- (11) Bad Play from Behind the Head String
- (12) Cue Stick on the Table
- (13) Playing out of Turn
- (14) Slow Play

10. Serious Fouls

The fouls listed under Rule 8 Losing the Rack are penalized by the loss of the current rack.