

The Billiards League of America has developed these Nine Ball Rules in effort to make a fair & fun playing environment for all involved. Knowing these rules will put you in a position to make a difference to not only yourself, but also to your captain, your team, your division, and the organization as a whole.

Thank you for being in a position to have this in your hands and to be a part of this wonderful pool league. We welcome your questions, comments, and suggestions! Thank you!

Rules posted on our web site take priority over printed rule books due to updates since the last rule book was printed.

"Rabbit" (Danny Rogers), League Operator
Billiards League of America

9 Ball Rules

1.0 Score Sheets

1.1 Preparing roster. When preparing your score sheet for match or tournament play, each team will fill in the players names that will be shooting for your team. Your lineup will then be made available to the other team to complete the roster for the night. After you show your roster to the other team, players can not be added, adjusted, or switched. Special situations may be addressed. Check with the opposing captain, division rep or league operator if changes are necessary.

1.2 Unranked players. When playing a new / unranked player, leave the rank box by their name blank. Unranked players can be placed in either of the four positions for your team. Match is played as normal with no handicap totals on the score sheet (see next paragraph).

1.2a After a new player has played (4) matches, their handicap is established. The office will enter retroactive for previous unranked matches and total the scores accordingly. If for whatever reason an unranked player does not complete 4 weeks of play, their 1, 2, or 3 played matches will be addressed by the division rep or league operator for ruling on scoring those matches before playoffs.

1.3 At the end of the match, write down the totals BEFORE handicap points are to be awarded. If unranked players are on the sheet, you are done. If no unranked players are on the sheet, add handicap points, then totals after handicap.

2.0 Adding New Players

2.1 No team can roster a player (to be active) after the 4th week of a session without approval from the league office. The captain (or team member if captain is not available) must contact the division rep; who may contact the league operator for assistance. This is on a situation dictates basis. A team with enough players will probably not be allowed to add players after the 4th week. A hardship situation could be an exception. Players added after the 4th week may or may not be eligible to play in the playoffs. Situation dictates and would need to be discussed with League Rep or Operator. Teams may add players at any time in order to have them available for next session.

2.1a If you are in doubt of an opponent's eligibility, do not create a disturbance or attempt to stop the match. You should speak with the opposing captain first, then the division rep. If necessary, you may contact the league operator. If the league operator cannot be reached, go ahead and play the match. If the player was not eligible it could result in forfeit of all games for that match for using an illegal player.

2.1b Players must play at least 4 weeks in the regular session to be eligible for the playoffs.

3.0 Racking & Breaking

3.1 Racking the balls. The 1 ball must be placed at the top of the rack (apex) and the 9 ball in the middle.

3.1a The balls must be racked as tightly as possible; each ball should be touching adjoining balls. Refrain from tapping object balls as respect to the table owner. The player breaking may request a re-rack that meets their satisfaction. If agreed by both players, the shooter may rack for themselves.

3.1b The BLA encourages using the "Magic Rack" or similar products if in good working order.

3.2 Break shots. The following are the requirements of a legal break. Either are acceptable.

- 3.2a 1. 4 object balls either contact a rail or cross the head string or combination of the two.
- 3.2a1 2. Any object ball pocketed.
- 3.2b The shooter gets a second attempt at a legal break if the first try is not successful. If the player does not make a legal break on the 2nd try, the player who racked would then have the option to break.
- 3.2c The game is not started until the cue ball contacts the one ball sitting on the apex of the rack. If the cue ball is deflected before contacting the one ball, this does not count as a break attempt for the shooter.
- 3.2d If a player miscues while breaking, and the cue ball doesn't give the player a legal break, there is no penalty; even if the shooter scratches.
- 3.3 If the 9-Ball is made on the break, the person that broke the rack has two options on how to continue:
- 3.3a 1. Re-rack and the same person break again; no score is awarded.
- 3.3a1 2. Spot the nine ball and continue the game with cue ball in current position and no point being awarded for the nine being made on the break. Additional pocketed balls are scored for the shooter.
- 3.3a2 If the nine ball & cue ball are made on the break, spot the nine and opponent is awarded ball in hand.
- 3.4 In each 2-Rack game, visiting team always breaks first and home team always breaks the second rack; no matter who won the first rack.

4.0 Legal Shots

- 4.1 Push out. On the first shot after the break, the shooter may elect to call a Push Out (also known as a Roll Out). This is usually done when the shooter does not have a desirable shot. On a push out, the shooter must shoot the cue ball with their cue tip (normal shot) but no other contact is required by the cue ball. Additional contact is acceptable including pocketing a ball but that pocketed ball is now a dead ball and would not be scored. Not contacting the lowest numbered ball or a rail is not a foul on the push out so ball in hand is not awarded. Any ball pocketed on a push out stays down except the 9-ball, which would be spotted on the foot spot immediately following the push out shot.
- 4.1a Following a push out shot, the incoming player has the option to take the shot from the new position or pass the shot back to the player who pushed out. No matter who shoots next, on the shot immediately following the push out, all rules apply.
- 4.2 Legal shot. A legal shot requires the cue ball to first make contact with the lowest numbered ball on the table and then either pocket any numbered ball, or cause any ball to contact a rail. A rail first kick shot is acceptable but contact with a rail or pocketing a ball must happen after contacting the lowest numbered ball. Combination and carom shots are allowed. As long as the cue ball makes contact with the lowest numbered ball on the table first, any balls pocketed are credited to the shooter unless it was an un-called nine ball. The nine ball must be called in order to be credited to the shooter. In the case of a combination or carom shot causing another ball to be pocketed, the next shot would then be on the same lowest numbered ball. There is no requirement to identify which ball will be pocketed except the nine ball. Luck shots after a legal hit, other than the nine ball, is considered a good shot and credited to the shooter. Unless otherwise specified in these rules, the game is over when the nine ball is pocketed on a called shot.
- 4.2a Calling the nine ball. If shooter calls the nine ball on a combination or carom shot, they have placed themselves in a "call shot" situation. In this case, your only allowable shot is the nine ball. Any other balls pocketed in addition to the nine ball are credited to the shooter. If the nine ball is not pocketed, any other balls pocketed are dead balls and are not scored.
- 4.2b Continuation shot. Shooter may pocket the nine ball on a legal hit combination or carom shot without scoring or ending the game. Shooter must inform your opponent of the call of a Continuation Shot. Making the nine ball after calling a continuation results in the nine ball being spotted on the foot spot and the shooter continues shooting with cue ball in current position.
- 4.2c A ball is considered pocketed if it drops off the table into a pocket and remains there. If a ball re-bounds from a pocket and comes to rest on the table, it is not a pocketed ball. In the (strange) event a previously pocketed ball were to be caused to return to the playing surface, this ball would be returned by hand to the pocket and replace other balls contacted by the previously pocketed ball. Inform opponent first!
- 4.2d Accidentally pocketing the nine ball requires the nine ball to be spotted with no score for the accidentally pocketed nine ball. The shooter remains at the table with cue ball in position. A safety may be

called when pocketing the nine ball ending the shooters turn at the table. Opponent accepts cue in position to continue the game.

4.3 Players must have at least 1 foot in contact with the floor when shooting or the shot is a foul and ball in hand is awarded to the opponent. This rule does not apply to a handicapped person IE: sitting in a wheelchair.

4.4 Frozen Balls. When the object ball you are shooting is frozen to a rail, one of four things must happen after the cue ball contacts that frozen object ball:

4.4a a. The frozen ball being pocketed.

4.4b b. The frozen ball contacting any rail after becoming un-frozen from the rail.

4.4c c. The cue ball contacting any rail.

4.4d d. Any other ball contacting a rail or being pocketed. Cue ball being pocketed is a foul.

4.4e If none of these happen, it is a foul.

5.0 Fouls

5.1 All fouls will result in ball in hand being awarded to the opponent. Ball in hand means the incoming shooter may place the cue ball anywhere on the table (with the exception of touching another ball) and shoot in any direction. There is no requirement to shoot "behind the line" or shoot only at balls that are "in front of the line" in order to be a legal shot.

5.1a Examples of fouls:

5.1a1 Anytime the cue ball comes to rest other than on the playing surface.

5.1a2 Failure to cause the cue ball to make contact with the lowest numbered ball first.

5.1a3 Failure to pocket a ball or contact a rail after contacting the lowest numbered ball on the table.

5.1a4 Touching the cue ball other than ball in hand.

5.1a5 Touching an object ball with the cue ball or your hand when placing the cue ball during ball in hand.

5.1a6 Using the cue tip or ferrule when placing the cue ball during ball in hand.

5.1a7 Incidental contact with the cue ball by an accidentally "bumped" ball, bridge, chalk, or other item.

5.1a8 Anything that impedes the cue ball while it is rolling (hand, stick, bridge, chalk, etc) is a foul and ball in hand is awarded to the opponent. This does not apply to "outside interference" that is not within the shooters control.

5.1a9 In the event an object has mistakenly fallen onto the playing surface during a game (chalk or other item), anyone can call attention to it before the player shoots.

5.1a10 Shooting a shot before all balls have come to a complete stop.

5.2 There is no 3 consecutive foul rule.

5.3 When a shot comes up that seems likely to lead to controversy, before the shot either team may request another BLA member to judge the legality of the shot. Both players must agree on the judging person. The decision of the person watching the shot is final.

5.3a If no team requested someone to judge a shot, the judgment will go in favor of the shooter.

6.0 Scoring

6.1 Shooter gets one point for each ball made on a legal shot. The exception is: You must call the nine ball. If the shot is a straight in obvious shot, there is no need to call it. Anything other than straight in needs to be called. If the nine ball is accidentally pocketed without being called, even if on a legal hit, the nine ball is not scored and will be spotted. Cue ball remains in position and the game continues. Making the nine ball without calling it is not a foul. If made on a legal hit, shooter remains at table after spotting nine ball except on a called safety.

7.0 Safety / Defensive Shots

7.1 Safety/Defensive Shots are legal. If you call a safety or defensive shot you automatically forfeit your next shot unless you make a ball. Because this is not a call your shot game, pocketed ball (other than the cue ball) are credited to the shooter and that shooter remains at the table. After a safety, incoming player will play the cue ball from its current position except on a scratch.

8.0 Jawed Balls

8.1 "Jawed balls" are balls that are locked together in the opening of the pocket (may be past the slate or not) but have not fallen into the pocket. These balls are considered pocketed. When balls are "jawed", player will unlock them by hand and allow them to fall into the pocket. Inform opponent first. The result of those two balls being pocketed determines if the shooter remains at the table. It is the same as if those two balls followed each other into the pocket. If there is 'daylight' between the balls, or between the ball & rail, the balls are not considered jawed. You may ask a league player from another team to assist if necessary.

9.0 Timeouts

9.1 Players rated 4 and below are allowed 2 timeouts per rack. Players rated 5 and above are allowed 1 timeout per rack.

9.2 The coach does not have to be the same for the entire match. Each player can call his/her own coach.

9.3 When a timeout is called, the coach may talk to other team mates before speaking with the shooter. Timeouts should be no longer than two minutes.

9.4 When a coach leaves the playing area the timeout is over. No further conversation allowed.

9.5 When calling a timeout with ball in hand, the player (not the coach) must be the last one to set the cue ball on the table. A coach is never allowed to set the cue ball up for a shot. The coach is, however, allowed to set the cue ball where they suggest the shooting player shoot it from. The shooting player must pick up the ball and place it back on the table before the shot or it is a foul and ball in hand is awarded to the opponent.

9.6 Items may not be used as "aiming points" IE: placed on the rail for the shooter to shoot at a particular spot. The coach may physically touch a spot on the rail where the shooter should aim as long as no type of mark is left on the cloth. Violations will result in ball in hand for the opponent.

9.7 It is not a timeout for a player to stop to ask a rule question. Opponent should be informed of the question.

10.0 Double Hit or Push Shots (Not to be confused with a Push Out Shot)

10.1 These are not legal and will result in a foul called giving ball in hand to opponent. When the cue ball is touching or close to touching the object ball, if the player shoots into the cue ball and the cue ball immediately trails the object ball, the shot is a foul and ball in hand is awarded to the opposing player. This is not a "follow" shot conducted with shooting the top of the cue ball for the purpose of position. The difference is the cue ball trailing the object ball.

11.0 Tie Breaking Procedures

11.1 A tie is acceptable during the session weeks but not in the playoffs. If the final score is tied, the tie breaking procedures will be as follows:

11.1a The highest ranking players of the same rank from each team play two racks. Flip (or lag if agreed) for first break; alternate break. Total points wins the tie breaker.

11.1b If there are not two equally ranked players, the highest ranked player from each team will play with the lower ranked player receiving a handicap difference of the two players.

12.0 Late or Absent Players

12.1 Late players. If a team has a player that will arrive late, teams should notify opponents and play around that player until he or she arrives. Players who are late are expected to be there by the end of the 2nd round. If the missing player is not there by the end of the 2nd round, the Ghost Player rule below will apply. In some tournaments or any playoff match, late players are not eligible. See 12.1a.

12.1a In the playoffs or tournament, players are allowed 10 minutes after scheduled match time. If the player is not there within 10 minutes, their games will be recorded as a loss. That players' opponents would be awarded 8 points for each of that players' games missed. Teams that are short players in the playoffs may play with the players in attendance but the absent players will receive zero points for their games. "Ghost Players" are not allowed in the playoffs.

12.2 Absent players. If a team is short a player for the league night, the three players present will play one extra game for that night, and one player will play two extra games. Player 1 would play their extra game in round 1, player 2 in round 2, and player 3 in round 3. The opposing team has the choice of which player plays

the 4th round. The ranking of the ghost player will be an average of the present players rankings. Note: The BLA office would like to avoid games being forfeited, but sometimes this can not be avoided. Makeup matches are acceptable when necessary. If a forfeit is necessary, the team captain should notify the League Rep or League Office. League fees are still required for forfeited matches.

12.3 Makeup matches are allowed when necessary. Notify the league office or division rep as soon as possible. Situation dictates as to make up or forfeit missed matches and will be determined by the league office or division rep. This match must be made up before the end of the current session. A make-up match may, in certain situations, be conducted in conjunction with a scheduled league match. If the two teams cannot agree on a make up date, they will notify the division rep or league operator as soon as possible for assistance.

12.4 "Missed matches, without advance notification, will result in a forfeit. If a team will miss a scheduled match, it is your responsibility to let the other team know in advance. When a team does not show up and does not give the other team advance notice, it is a forfeit. Points go to the opposing team. Ball count will be paid to the present team (based on team average) but will not count towards player handicap rating. Both teams are still responsible to pay the weekly league fees.

When you will miss a match, inform your Division Rep as early as possible. Traveling teams: it is also your responsibility to inform your host location of the planned missed match."

13.0 Spotting Balls

13.1 When spotting balls, they shall be placed on the table along the "short string" after shooters turn is complete. The short string refers to the foot side of the foot spot on an imaginary line running through the center of the table from the head rail to the foot rail and intersects the head spot, center spot, and foot spot (even if the spots are not identified). The foot side runs from the foot spot to the foot rail along this imaginary line. A single ball is placed on the foot spot. If more than one ball is to be spotted, they are placed along the short string, beginning on the foot spot and advancing toward the foot rail.

13.1a When balls on or near the foot spot or short string interfere with the spotting of balls, the balls to be spotted are placed on the short string as close as possible to the foot spot without moving the interfering balls. Spotted balls are to be placed frozen to such interfering balls (or as close as possible if the felt is damaged and will not allow for the ball to be frozen), except when the cue ball is interfering. Balls to be spotted against the cue ball are placed approximately 1/8 to 1/4 inch from the cue ball. If there is insufficient room on the short string between the foot spot and the foot rail cushion for balls that must be spotted, such balls are then placed on the "long string" in front of the foot spot (between foot spot and head rail) as near as possible to the foot spot and in the same order as if they were spotted "behind" the foot spot.

14.0 Jump & Masse Shots

14.1 Jump and masse shots are legal; based on the facility house rule. There is no limit on how high a player can hold their back hand on the cue stick.

15.0 Jumped Balls (Not to be confused with a legal Jump Shot)

15.1 The term 'jumped ball' here refers to a ball coming to rest other than on the table or in a pocket. A jumped object ball is not a foul. Jumped balls will be pocketed and not counted for score (dead balls). If the shooter pockets their called ball and a ball is jumped, they have made a legal shot and will remain at the table. A jumped cue ball is the same as a scratch.

16.0 Miscellaneous

16.1 All players must be at least 18 years old to play a league match.

16.2 Practice time. In a travel division the home team will provide practice time for both teams prior to the league match. Generally 1/2 hour to 1 hour before a league match. With an in-house division, this should not be an issue.

16.3 A "shot" is not complete until all balls on the table have come to a stop. Player should not shoot while any ball is still in motion. If this happens, it is a foul and ball in hand is awarded to the opponent.

16.4 Any player on the two competing teams seeing an infraction can say so. If you are not on those two teams, you should not get involved unless requested to do so as in watching a shot, etc.

16.5 After a player has shot and their turn is over, they must move away from the table and not return to the playing area until it is their turn again. This includes picking up the chalk or replacing it on the table. When your shot is over, leave the playing area and remain clear as a courtesy to your opponent. Playing area is defined as the area between the tables, or approx. 5ft in either direction from the table if there is no adjoining table. Location layout may dictate exceptions.

16.6 When it is your turn to approach the table, you must wait until your opponent has left the playing area as a courtesy to your opponent. You are not allowed to "rush" up to the table just because your opponent has missed their shot. This is more sportsmanship than a rule.

16.7 If, while a player is shooting, the opposing player does anything that could be viewed as conceding the game, the shooting player is awarded the remaining balls with no need to complete their shot. This sometimes happens when a player is shooting the 9-Ball or some of the last balls leading up to the 9-Ball. Some examples (but not limited to): 1. Breaking down their stick. 2. Reaching into a table pocket. 3. Extending a hand in a handshake pose. 4. Putting anything on the table. 5. Saying anything that could indicate conceding the game.

This must be witnessed by the opposing player; not a team mate or captain. Player conceding would get credit for their pocketed balls. If the shooting player continues to shoot, the game is still on and not conceded.

16.8 Each team captain is responsible for insuring the league fees are paid each league night. The total amount is due for the team regardless of number of players present.

16.9 The league will not score stalemated games. It is understandable, at times, with the position of the balls, it may be risky for either player to attempt a shot or a break out shot. Players are allowed to give ball in hand to each other without shooting. In this situation, if both players agree to not shoot, then re-rack and play the game over with the same player who broke that game to break in the re-rack.

16.10 The cue ball is live at all times. If you touch the cue ball while it is moving on the table, during a game, it is a loss of game and all remaining points of that rack are awarded to opponent. This includes catching the cue ball falling into a pocket.

16.10a If the cue ball or object ball(s) need to be cleaned during a game, this is permissible when following these guidelines: Notify your opponent. The two players must agree on who will clean the ball, and how the ball position will be marked for replacement.

The BLA Office has access to get a professional ball marker and anyone in the league can obtain these from the office. You may use your own marker if approved.

16.10b Exception to cleaning a ball during a game: When either cue ball or object ball are in a situation where clearance for a shot is very close or objectionable. Improper replacing of the cleaned ball could make a difference on the clearance. When this happens, cleaning a ball is not an option.

16.11 If a player accidentally moves an object ball they must notify the opposing player. Opponent has the option to move ball back to its original spot, allow the shooter to move it back, or leave it as it sits. If the shooter moves the ball back without permission from the opponent, it is a foul. Any player from the two competing teams can identify an infraction.

16.12 If the balls are moved (or a player is bumped causing play to be directly affected) by a non-player during the match, the balls shall be replaced as near as possible to their original positions immediately prior to the incident, and play shall resume with no penalty on the player affected. If the balls cannot be restored to their original positions, restart the game with the original player breaking.

16.13 If a game is accidentally started out of order, it does not count even if you are to play that person later. Players or captains may agree to override this rule during session play; not in playoffs or tournament.

16.14 If a situation arises that is not covered in these rules, the Division Rep or League Operator has the position to make a judgment on the situation and holds final judgment. It is our intention to maintain a fun & fair league. We will do what we can do to make sure you are treated with Fairness and Respect. Hopefully all the bases have been covered in these rules. If not, someone has to make a final judgment when necessary. Thank you for your support!

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