



WPBA TOURNAMENT 9-BALL RULES

(Revised 4.21.24)

Object of the Game

The game of Nine ball is played with nine object balls numbered one through nine and a cue ball. On each shot the first ball the cue ball contacts must be the lowest-numbered ball on the table, but the balls need not be pocketed in order. If a player pockets any ball on a legal shot, she remains at the table for another shot, and continues until she misses, fouls, or wins the game by pocketing the nine ball. After a miss, the incoming player must shoot from the position left by the previous player, but after any foul shot the incoming player may start with the cue ball anywhere on the table. Players are not required to call any shot except to declare a push out.

Racking the Balls

RACK YOUR OWN:

The object balls are racked in a diamond shape, with the one ball at the top of the diamond, the nine ball in the center of the diamond, the two (2) ball placed in the rear of the rack, and the other balls in random order, racked with all balls touching, as close as possible.

The Tournament Director may also act as the table referee or appoint a table referee in the semi-finals or final matches. The table referee will rack the balls for both players.

Order of Play

Order of play is determined by a lag. Player's "cue ball" arriving closest to the head rail wins the option to break or have the opponent break, providing their "cue ball" did not touch the long cushion, cross the center of the table, strike the foot cushion more than once, scratch, or come to rest inside the pocket. Subsequent breaks (winner or alternate format) will be announced in the event information.

Illegal Break (template rack)

1. **If on the break, 4 numbered balls do not contact a rail or pocket, the incoming player will have the option to take ball in hand or re-rack and break.**
2. On the break, a minimum of 3 (three) numbered balls must be pocketed or break the plane of the headstring line or a combination of both.
3. If a player fails to meet the requirements in (1), but otherwise makes a legal break, the incoming player has the option to accept the table as is, or hand the shot back to her opponent. In accepting the table as is, in this case, the incoming player is **not** permitted to play a "push out". She must play a legal shot.
4. If the table is handed back to the breaker, she is allowed to play a "push out". If so her opponent will then have the choice to play the shot or hand it back.

5. If a player fails to meet the requirements of (1), but otherwise makes a legal break and pockets the 9-ball, the 9-ball is spotted before the next shot.

9-Ball Break

The 9-ball will **not count** in the bottom two pockets (nearest where the balls are racked). If this occurs, the 9-ball is spotted and the breaker shoots from where the cue ball lies.

Push Out

The player who shoots the shot immediately after a legal break may play a push-out. On a push-out, the cue ball may contact any ball, and is not required to contact a rail. You do not have to contact a ball to be a legal push-out. All other foul rules still apply.

The player must announce her intention of playing a push out before the shot, or the shot is considered to be a normal shot. To avoid conflict, make eye contact with the opponent when declaring a push-out.

Any ball pocketed on a push remains pocketed except the 9-ball, which is spotted on the foot spot. Following a legal push-out, the incoming player is permitted to shoot from that position or to pass the shot back to the player who pushed out.

A push-out is not considered to be a foul unless the cue ball or an object ball comes to rest off the playing surface or the cue ball scratches. An illegal push-out is penalized with ball in hand for the opponent. If a player scratches on the break shot, the incoming player cannot play a push-out.

Legal Shot, the cue ball must always hit the lowest-numbered ball first and either cause an object ball to be pocketed or cause any ball, including the cue ball, to contact a rail. Failure to do so is a foul, with the incoming player receiving the cue ball in hand.

Continuing Play

If the breaker pockets one or more balls on a legal break, she continues to shoot until she misses, fouls, or wins the game. If the player misses or fouls, the other player begins her inning and shoots until she misses, fouls, or wins. The game is won when the nine ball is pocketed on a legal shot.

Positioning with Ball in Hand

It is legal to position the cue ball with your hand, arm or cue stick (including the ferule and tip) as long as there is no attempt at a shot taking place while this is happening. Fouls

A foul is committed when:

- ◆ A player pockets the cue ball, fails to strike the lowest numbered ball first, or fails to drive any ball to a rail after legal contact.
- ◆ Any ball comes to rest off the playing surface.
- ◆ A player touches the cue ball in play; purposely touches an object ball; or accidentally disturbs an object ball that has any effect on the outcome of the shot. At the non-shooting player's option and discretion, the disturbed ball may be restored to its original position or left in its new position..

- ◆ If two or more object balls are inadvertently disturbed during the same shot.
 - ◆ When placing the cue ball with the ball in hand, if you move any ball with the cue ball or with your hand or arm that the cue ball is in.
 - ◆ During an attempt to jump, curve or masse the cue ball over or around an impeding object ball, the impending ball moves (regardless if it was moved by a hand, cue stick or bridge).
 - ◆ You miscue while executing a jump shot or masse.
 - ◆ The intended object ball is frozen to a rail, the player fails to either pocket a ball, drive the cue ball to a rail, send an object ball to a rail, or send the object ball to another rail. **NOTE:** For this rule to be in effect, the frozen object ball must be declared by the non-shooting player and acknowledged by the shooting player prior to the shot taking place.
 - ◆ A shot is played without having at least one foot on the floor at the moment the cue tip strikes the cue ball.
 - ◆ Touching a moving ball or to allow that ball to hit any foreign object, such as a cube of chalk (the top of the rail is not considered to be a foreign object).
 - ◆ A shot is played while any ball is in motion (a spinning ball is in motion).
 - ◆ A player strikes the cue ball below center ("digs under it") and intentionally causes it to rise off the bed of the table in an effort to clear an obstructing ball.
 - ◆ The cue ball is frozen to an illegal object ball and that ball is moved in the process of shooting.
 - ◆ The tip of the cue stick strikes the cue ball more than once during the execution of a shot or is still in contact with the cue ball when it strikes the object ball (including a push-out).
 - ◆ Debating the use of the shot clock.(see shot clock usage for further explanation)
- **NOTE:** When the cue ball is frozen to the object ball, the player may, with a legal stroke, shoot through the object ball without committing a foul. If the balls are close and you shoot straight through and the cue ball travels past the outer edge of the object ball, a foul will be called.

Other Possible Ball in Hand fouls:

Devices

Players are not allowed to use a ball, rack or any width measuring device to see if the cue ball or an object ball would travel through a space between two balls or ball and cushion etc. Doing so is a foul. Only the cue stick may be used as an aid to judge gaps, etc., so long as the cue is held by the hand. To do so otherwise is a foul.

Catching Balls

During play, a player may not catch, touch, or in any way, deliberately, interfere with a ball as it enters a pocket. The incoming player will receive the cue ball in hand, including if the ball does not fall into the pocket.

Equipment

Preparing to shoot a ball along the cushions and across the mouth of a side pocket, and pushing on the tip of the cushion or manipulating the cloth at the tip of the side pocket regardless of whether the player attempts the shot or not. Result: Foul

Rail Safety

When an object ball is close to a rail but not frozen, and the players are taking turns softly tapping the object ball with the cue ball to the same rail, this is called a rail safety or nursing. The player who performed this shot first must make the cue ball hit any rail, make an object ball hit a rail, or make the object ball go to a different rail on her third attempt - or it is a foul.

Other rules:

Settling Into Place

A ball may settle slightly after it appears to have stopped. If a ball falls into a pocket as the result of such settling, after being immobile for 5 seconds, it is replaced as close as possible to its original position. If a ball falls into a pocket during or just prior to a shot, and has an effect on the shot, the tournament director will restore the position and the shot will be replayed. Players are not penalized for shooting while a ball is settling.

Three Consecutive Fouls

If the same player commits three consecutive fouls during a game, it is a loss of game. Any foul committed on the break counts towards the three foul rule. The opponent, or referee, if present, must warn the player that she is on two fouls, for the third foul to result in loss of game; otherwise the player remains on two fouls unless a legal hit is executed.

General Rules and Guidelines

Calling A Referee

It is the responsibility of the non-shooting player to call a referee or tournament director before any controversial shot is attempted. The non-shooting player must tell the shooting player and that player must wait for the official to arrive before attempting the shot. The decision of the official is final.

Forfeits

Players will have Ten (10) minutes to report to their match, once the match is announced by the tournament director or has started on time per digital pool.. If a player fails to report to their assigned table within the Ten (10) minutes, the offending player will forfeit one game. If the offending player is not present at the (15) fifteen minute point, they will forfeit the entire match. A **start log** is kept for each match/table at the tournament director's desk.

Five Minute Time Out

Players are allowed one five-minute time-out during each match. A time-out may only be taken **between** racks. If the opponent chooses to continue play, the tournament director must first be called to watch the game. If the opponent chooses not to continue play, but also leaves the arena, she must return immediately upon the end of the five minute time-out. The opponent may choose to practice at that table while waiting for players return, but neither may practice on another table inside or outside the tournament arena.

NOTE: Players taking their time out must leave the tournament arena and retire to a private area designated for players only, or to a restroom or lounge area.

Etiquette

Whenever possible, players must be seated while their opponent is shooting. Unscrewing **any** cue while the opponent is at the table is a loss of game. Conceding the nine ball is only allowed on the final game of the match. Conceding any balls, at any other time will result in a fine.

Shot Clock Usage

If a match is progressing slowly:

The match may only be placed on a shot clock by the tournament director between games.. A match may also be put on the clock at any time during the match (only between games), at the Tournament Director's discretion. **Debating the use of a shot clock will result in the loss of the break and ball in hand after the break for the opponent. Continued debate will result in a one game forfeiture and a possible fine. If both players debate the usage, a fine may be levied upon both players.**

How the shot clock works:

Simple explanation: If a timekeeper calls ten, the player has two options: (1) shoot within the remaining time (maximum ten seconds) or (2) ask the timekeeper for an extension.

Further explanation: After the break, there is a 60-second shot clock. If a player pushes out, the incoming player also has 60 seconds to shoot. Then all following shots will have a 40-second shot clock. The shot clock starts when all balls have stopped rolling and stops when the cue tip strikes the cue ball. A player will receive a ten (10) second warning from the shot clock administrator. A ten (10) second warning will not be issued when a player is down over a shot. If 30 or more seconds have elapsed and the player stands up or breaks focus in any way from the shot, a ten (10) second warning is then issued. Failure to shoot within the 40 second rule is a foul, allowing the opponent cue ball in hand. One **40** second extension is allowed per player, per game except in the case of a **hill-hill** match in which each player will be allowed **two extensions** per game. The player must ask for an extension and be acknowledged by the clock administrator. Clock stoppage will also be granted if a player from another table is shooting and causes the clocked player to wait for their shot, player requires a bridge or needs to change their cue, or spectator actions cause interference with either the player or the clock administrator. **Unscrewing a middle extension of your cue will not cause the time to stop.** Time resumes when the player can once again play without interference. The clock stoppage rule also applies when either player calls for a referee to judge a hit or situation. Time resumes once the referee has made a decision or is in a position to observe the shot.

The shot clock operator will not act as the referee.

Illegal Marking

Players are not allowed to mark the cushions or table cloth with chalk marks, etc. Doing so will be considered a foul. Players are not allowed to lay their cue stick on the table, without holding it, while a game is in progress or it is considered a foul.

Interference

Intentionally distracting or interfering with an opponent's play is illegal and can be declared a foul, or may result in forfeiture, at the discretion of the tournament director.

Spectators

Conversation with spectators is not allowed either during play or while on break, except in the context of showmanship. Spectators may not be called upon to witness a hit, make a call, or lend advice at any time during a match.

NOTE: Failure to comply with the two previous rules may constitute a foul or unsportsmanlike behavior punishable by warning or fine.

Outside Interference

Should a spectator intentionally distract any player during a match, the player should not approach the spectator, but ask the tournament director to advise the spectator of their distracting behavior. If the behavior continues, only the tournament director or host has the authority to remove the fan from the arena.

Use of Non-Traditional Equipment

It is the responsibility of the player to bring non-traditional equipment to the attention of the specifications committee BEFORE using such equipment in professional competition.

If the specs committee has no set guideline already in place regarding the use of the equipment, the equipment will be disallowed until a ruling can be made. The committee is allowed 45 days for such a ruling to take place, during which time the equipment may not be used. If, after the 45 days, no decision has been reached by the committee, the equipment in question may be used until a final ruling is made.