



UNITED STATES

PROFESSIONAL POOLPLAYERS

ASSOCIATION

The Evolution of Pool™

Official UPA Rulebook for 9-Ball

Fourth Edition 2012 Revised Edition

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UPA OFFICIAL 9-BALL RULES

INTRODUCTION



Welcome to the official 9-ball rules of the UPA. The rules you are about to read and understand are the collaboration of years of deliberation from our Touring Professionals; both foreign and domestic. Our professionals have come together to ensure a simple yet highly effective ruling system that is sure to challenge you as a player while evolving your level of play.

Please note that due to issues of television, timed matches, and professional match play some rules may slightly differ from the actual professional tour. The following rules have been slightly amended by our Touring Pros and are intended for amateur use in pool rooms across the nation. These rules are utilized by the UPA Amateur League of Champions™.

It is our hope that your desire is to evolve your level of play and standard of sportsmanship. Going forward, take the time to know and understand these rules so that you can also educate and encourage your fellow players. Furthering the education of our professional standards will result in nationwide consistency that will overall help the vitality of the sport of pocket billiards in the United States of America.

The United States Professional Poolplayers Association (UPA) is dedicated to the evolution of the entire sport of pocket billiards so that you can enjoy years of game play and continue to grow personally from your experience in the game. The official motto of the UPA brand is 'The Evolution of Pool™' as we are committed to every aspect of the sport and the vitality of it.

Feel free to contact the UPA if you have any questions or comments so that we may be able to further assist you. Also be sure to join our League of Champions™ and watch your game rise to professional standards.

Thank you and God bless,

Frank Alvarez III

Frank Alvarez III
UPA President

1. OBJECT OF THE GAME

The object of 9-ball is to win by legally pocketing the 9-ball.

The cue ball must strike the lowest numbered ball first for legal hit to occur. After the lowest ball is struck first, either the cue ball or any numbered ball may hit the 9 ball into any pocket for the win. If the shooting player pockets the lowest numbered ball or other numbered ball after a legal hit, the shooting player continues his/her inning. If no ball is pocketed, either the cue ball or any numbered ball must touch a rail after the cue ball contacts the lowest numbered ball for the shot to be legal.

NOTE: If the 9-ball is pocketed illegally, then it is to be spotted on the foot spot with incoming player having "ball in hand."

2. LAG FOR BREAK

The Player with the lowest official UPA Speed (Rating) shall break first with an alternating break format taking place thereafter. In the event that two players with equal speeds play, a coin toss shall determine who breaks first with an alternating break format taking place thereafter. In non-league play both players lag to the end rail and back to the head rail to determine who breaks first. Winner of lag is the player whose ball is closest to head of the rail.

2.1 HOW TO RACK: The balls are racked in a diamond shape with the 1-ball on the foot spot at the top of the diamond, the 9-Ball in the center of the diamond, the 2-ball at the bottom of the diamond, and the rest of the balls randomly dispersed throughout the rack.

2.2 RACK YOUR OWN: When there is no official available each breaking player shall be responsible for providing himself/herself a legal and solid rack.

2.3 BALL TAPPING: Tapping or touching balls is not permitted once the rack is removed from the balls. The penalty for ball tapping/touching after the rack has been removed is a loss of break.

3. LEGAL BREAK SHOT

With cue ball in hand behind the head string, the one ball must be struck first and any three numbered balls must pass the center of the table. Balls dropping in any pocket counts as going past the center line.

Break fouls include:

- a. If the cue ball is touched by the cue tip and does not meet the legal break requirement, it is a foul and gives the non-breaker an option of cue ball in hand or a re-rack and with the original player breaking again.
- b. If the cue ball is pocketed or driven off the table, it is a foul and the non-breaking player has cue ball in hand.
- c. If any numbered ball leaves the table or comes to rest on top of a rail, it is a foul and the non-breaking player has cue ball in hand.

- d. A foul on the break attempt counts towards the three fouls in the “three consecutive fouls” loss of game rule.

4. 9-BALL POCKETED ON BREAK:

Legally pocketing the 9-ball on the break wins the game for the breaker.

5. PUSH OUT

- a. Only on the inning immediately following the break, the shooting player may elect to call a “Push.” On a Push out, the shooter is required to hit the cue ball with the tip of the cue, but the cue ball is not required to touch another ball or a rail, therefore the rules “BAD HIT,” “NO RAIL,” and “TABLE SCRATCH” under “BALL IN HAND FOULS” do not apply, but all other foul rules are still in effect. The shooting player must declare his intention to push by saying “Push” or “Push Out” either to his opponent or to the referee, or the shot is considered a normal shot. Any ball pocketed on a push stays down except the 9-Ball which would be spotted on the foot spot immediately following the push. Following a legal push shot, the incoming player has the option to take the shot from the new layout or to pass the shot back to the player who pushed out. No matter who shoots next, on the shot immediately following the push out, all “BALL IN HAND FOULS” now apply, and the normal course of play continues.

6. CONTINUING PLAY

On the shot immediately following a legal break, the shooting player may play a “PUSH OUT.” If the breaker pockets one or more balls on a legal break, he/she continues to shoot until he misses fouls or wins the game. If the player misses or fouls, the other player begins an inning and shoots until missing, committing a foul, or winning. The game ends when the 9-Ball is pocketed on a legal shot or game is forfeited for serious infractions of the rules.

7. BALL IN HAND FOUL PENALTIES

When a player commits a ball in hand foul, he/she must relinquish his turn at the table. The incoming player may now place the cue ball anywhere on the table to start his/her inning. If a player commits more than one foul on one shot, only one foul will be called. A player must make sure he/she has ball in hand before touching the cue ball. The following are cue ball in hand fouls:

7.1 CUE BALL FOULS ONLY:

- a. Touching the cue ball: Touching or causing even the slightest movement of the cue ball (other than a normal shot), even accidentally, is a foul. However a player may use the ferrule or shaft of his/her cue to line up his/her cue ball when a “cue ball in hand” is in play (using the tip is a foul, and ball in hand will be given to the other player).
- b. Touching a moving object ball: Touching a moving object ball is a foul as is allowing a moving ball to hit a foreign object.

- c. Touching a still object ball: Any ball moved accidentally can only be replaced by the opponent. However the opponent may exercise the option of keeping disturbed ball(s) in new position if they so choose. The player who has committed the foul may move the fouled object ball back to original position only after receiving consent from the opponent. If the player who has fouled touches any of the disturbed balls without consent of opponent it will result in a loss of turn with ball in hand to the opponent.

7.2 SCRATCH: Pocketing the cue ball or driving it off the table is a ball in hand foul.

7.3 BAD HIT: If the first object ball contacted by the cue ball is not the lowest numbered ball in the remaining order it is a ball in hand foul.

7.4 NO RAIL: If, after the cue ball first strikes a legal ball, and neither the cue ball nor any other ball hits a rail or is pocketed, it is a ball in hand foul.

7.5 BALLS OFF THE TABLE: Except for a legal shot, causing any ball to come to rest off the playing surface is a foul. This includes any accidental movement of a ball which results in a ball falling into a pocket. The ball accidentally pocketed is not brought back into play, and the incoming player has cue ball in hand.

If a player knocks a ball off the table, it is a foul. If the ball returns to the playing surface after hitting a person or an object, it is a foul. NOTE: If a player removes the 9-ball from the playing surface it results as a foul and the 9-ball is placed on the foot spot.

7.6 FOOT ON THE FLOOR: Failure to have at least one foot on the floor at the moment the cue tip strikes the cue ball is a ball in hand foul.

7.7 JUMP SHOT: Any miscue on a jump shot is a ball in hand foul. A legal jump shot must be executed by stroking down through the cue ball (no scooping or miscues).

7.8 MOVING BALL: Shooting while any ball is moving or spinning is a foul.

7.9 DOUBLE HIT: If the cue tip strikes the cue ball twice on the same stroke it is a ball in hand foul. (Cue ball must be struck at a minimum of a 45° angle when in contact with intended object ball in order to avoid a double hit).

7.10 HEAD STRING: The base of the cue ball must be inside the head string on the break or it is a ball in hand foul.

7.11 BALL IN HAND PLACEMENT: To touch an object ball in any way while placing the cue ball is also a foul.

7.12 INTERFERENCE: Not remaining seated while the shooting player is at the table may result in a tournament official calling a foul for interference. The non-shooting player may check a table briefly in order to determine whether or not a referee should be called, however must be seated again after determination. If a player shoots out of turn, or moves any ball except during his inning, it is interference.

Talking, making noises, moving around, causing distraction (sharking) in some way or conduct unbecoming that of a professional while the shooting player is at the table may also result in a tournament official calling a foul for interference.

7.13 MARKING THE TABLE: Marking the table in any way, which could provide a player with an advantage in executing a shot, is a foul, unless the mark is removed to the satisfaction of the opponent or referee prior to shooting.

7.14 USE OF EQUIPEMENT: Out of play balls may not be used to measure gaps or spaces of any kind. Using any equipment in a non-customary manner is never allowed and constitutes a foul. It is the responsibility of the shooting player to know what the intended use of equipment; the bridge, jump cues, etc.

8. LOSS OF GAME

8.1 OPPONENT WINS: The opponent legally pockets the 9-ball.

8.2 THREE CONSECUTIVE FOULS: If a shooter commits a foul three times in a row without making an intervening legal shot, the result is a loss of game. The three consecutive fouls must occur in one game; fouls do not carry over to next game. A warning must be given by the referee (or by the opponent, if referee is not present) before the possible third foul, for the third foul to be a loss of game.

8.3 CONCEDED A GAME: Conceit of a game or games in tournament play is never encouraged. The shooting player must finish his/her inning or no matter the result, shall be a loss of game(s) for the conceding player.

8.4 CONCESSION OF MATCH: Unscrewing any cues during the last game (or while the shooting player is on the hill), putting on a jacket, or undertaking any other actions which would indicate that the match is over, is considered a forfeiture of the match.

8.5 COACHING ASSISTANCE: A player is only allotted the right to ask any team member for input or advice in the planning or preparing to execute a shot once per game and only during their inning. Should the player receive advice from respective teammates spontaneously or purposely the current game shall be forfeited in favor of the opponent.

NOTE: When the shooting player decides to receive instruction from his/her team, the player is to call a "Time Out." When a "Time Out" is called, the player is to then name one of their team members. The team member selected is to immediately assist the player without conferring with other members and may not use any items or tools to aid the shooting player.

9. GENERAL POOL RULES

9.1 SPLIT HITS: If the cue ball strikes a legal object ball and a non-legal object ball at about the same instant, and it cannot be clearly determined which ball was hit first, the judgment will go in favor of the shooter.

9.2 BALL REBOUNDS FROM POCKET: Balls must remain in a pocket to count as pocketed. If a ball goes into a pocket and bounces back on to the playing surface, it is not considered pocketed. If it is the 9-ball, it is not a win. If it is the cue ball, it is not a

scratch. Clearing pockets which are full or nearly full of balls is the responsibility of the shooting player.

9.3 HANGING BALL: If an object ball hangs in a pocket, the ball is considered to be pocketed if it drops in 5 seconds or less after coming to complete rest by the hole. If a hanging ball drops in the pocket after being at rest for 5 seconds or more, the ball is returned to the original position on the edge and the incoming player's may begin his/her inning. Both players will have the opportunity to argue their case, and the referee's decision is final.

9.4 SUSPENDED BALLS: If one or more balls become suspended in a pocket beyond the edge of the slate because it is partially supported by other balls, it is considered pocketed if the removal of the supporting ball(s) would cause the supported/suspended ball to fall into the pocket. Tournament officials are the sole judges of whether this rule applies to any situation.

9.5 SETTLING INTO PLACE: A ball may settle slightly after it appears to have stopped, possibly due to slight imperfections in the cloth or table slate. Unless this causes a ball to fall into a pocket, it is considered a normal hazard of play, and will not be moved back. If a ball falls into a pocket as a result of such settling, it is replaced as close as possible to its original position on the lip of the pocket. If a ball falls into a pocket during or just prior to a shot and it has an effect on the shot, the referee will restore the ball to its original position and the shot will be replayed. Players are not penalized for shooting while a ball is settling.

9.6 JUMP SHOTS: It is legal to cause the cue ball to leave the surface of the table by elevating the butt of the cue and, with a downward stroke, force the cue ball to rise off the playing surface. For the shot to be legal only the cue tip may touch the cue ball – the shot must not be “scooped” by the ferrule or shaft. Any miscue on a jump shot is a ball in hand foul. A legal jump cue must be at least 40 inches in length and constructed in typical cue fashion. NOTE: Standard jump cues are accepted including phenolic tips. However cues that are not typical in appearance must be accepted and approved by the United States Professional Poolplayers Association (UPA).

10. TOURNAMENET DIRECTOR / REFEREES

10.1 PLAYER RESPONSIBILITY: It is the responsibility of each member to be aware of all rules, regulations, and schedules relating to his/her competition. Tournament officials will make every reasonable effort to make the information readily available to all players; however, the ultimate responsibility rests with each individual player. There is no recourse if a player does not obtain correct or complete information. NOTE: Players may always call for rules clarification during league play. This is not considered a “Time Out.”

10.2 REFEREES: The League Operator (or his/her assistants) will perform the duties of a referee in the event that referees are busy or not utilized. If the Tournament Director, his/her assistants or a referee is not to be found within a reasonable time frame, a spectator may sub as an official referee when agreed upon by both players.

10.3 PLAYING WITHOUT A REFEREE: When a referee or tournament official is not available, the players in the match will be responsible for racking balls, watching for

fouls, and insuring adherence to the rules of competition. Both players may agree on an audience member to stand in and perform any duty of a tournament official.

10.4 QUESTIONABLE SHOT: If there is a shot that could be a questionable hit or foul, the seated player is responsible for calling for a tournament official to watch the hit before the opponent shoots. Once notified, the player at the table must then wait for an official to watch the shot. Likewise, if a player is uncertain whether some rule has been broken, he is responsible for seeking immediate clarification from league officials or rule book before play continues. After play continues, it is unlikely that a problem can be remedied.

10.5 ADVICE VS. RULES CLARIFICATION: The referee must NEVER give advice nor offer an opinion on points of play. Only when asked by either player for clarification of a rule will the referee then explain that a specific rule to the best of his/her ability. Any incorrect statement by the referee will not protect a player from enforcement of the actual rule. When asked, the referee must tell either player the score, whether the cue ball is frozen to an object ball or rail, etc. If the referee sees that a foul is about to be committed by either player, he must say nothing until after the foul, since any warning before the foul would constitute "advice" from the referee.

10.6 PROMPTING WARNINGS: When it is either player's opinion that the referee is failing to issue a mandatory warning, he/she may remind the referee that such a warning is necessary.

10.7 CALLING FOULS: The referee will call all fouls as soon as they occur and will inform the incoming player that he/she has ball in hand.

10.8 PROTESTING FOULS: If a player believes that the referee has failed to call a foul, he must protest to the referee before his/her opponent takes his/her next shot. If the player fails to do so, the foul is considered not to have occurred.

10.9 RESTORING POSITION: When it becomes necessary, the referee will restore disturbed balls to their original positions to the best of their ability. The referee may solicit information for this purpose, if he/she is not sure of original positions. If the balls were disturbed by a player in the match, his/her opponent has the option of preventing restoration. If the balls were disturbed by someone else, then it is a mandatory for the referee to restore the balls. In this case, the referee may instruct the shooter to replay the shot after restoration, if the outside interference had an effect on the outcome of the shot. If not, the referee will instruct the shooter to continue play after restoration.

10.10 VERIFICATION: The referee may use any means to gather needed information to make a decision concerning a disputed play or game situation.

10.11 REPLAY OF GAME: If a tournament official or his/her appointed substitute, cannot make a clear determination of the facts or specific circumstances relating to a given rule or game situation, the tournament official has the option of requiring that shot be replayed or a game be restarted.

10.12 RESOLVING DISPUTES: Any disagreement between the two players will be resolved by the League Operator or his/her appointed substitute, or any administrative member of the UPA.

11. SPECIAL RULINGS

Any rule or situation not covered in this text shall be decided by the League Operator or his/her appointed substitute or any administrative member of the UPA in accordance with UPA ideals and guidelines in an expedient manner. Such expedient rulings shall then be considered by the administration of the UPA and its Touring Professionals before further instruction or implementation of the matter is finalized.

- a. **ADDENDUM:** From time to time there may be addendums issued by the UPA to the UPA official Rule book and it is the individual player's responsibility to keep current.