

# Pool Billiards – The Regulations

(Effective 1/2/16)

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[Editorial comment on the U.S. English version: The masculine gender has been used for simplicity of wording and is not intended to specify the gender of the players or officials.]

## 1. Administrative Discretion

These regulations address dress requirements, protests, scheduling issues, and other items that are not part of the actual Rules of Play but need to be regulated for the individual event. Some aspects of applying the regulations vary from tournament to tournament, such as the number of sets in a match and who breaks after the first rack at nine ball. The management of an event is entitled to enforce regulations for the event. These Regulations do not have the same force as the Rules; the Rules have priority.

## 2. Exceptions to the Rules

The actual Rules of Play may not be altered unless a specific waiver is issued by the WPA Sports Director or other WPA official for the individual event. A written explanation of any rules change should be made available at the players' meeting.

## 3. Dress Code

Each player's attire must always meet the level of the competition and be clean, proper and in good condition. If an athlete is unsure about the legality of his attire, the athlete should approach the tournament director before the match and ask whether the attire is legal. The tournament director has the final say with regards to the legality of attire. In exceptional circumstances, the director may permit a player to compete in violation of the dress code e.g. when airline luggage has been misplaced. A player may be disqualified for dress code violation.

If there is no announcement before the event, the WPA dress code is assumed. The following are the current requirements for World Championship and World Tour events.

### 3.1 Men

Men may wear either a long sleeve shirt and button-down vest or a regular collared shirt or polo shirt of any color. Shirt or polo shirt must be tucked in. It must be in a good condition and clean. No T-shirts are allowed. The shirt must have at least a short.

Dress pants will be clean and in good condition and may be of any color. Denim/blue jeans of any color are forbidden even though a jeans design is allowed.

Shoes must be elegant dress shoes that fit in the outfit. Sneakers and sandals are not allowed. Sports shoes with a dark top of leather or leather-like material are allowed but are subject to the tournament director's discretion.

### 3.2 Women

Women may wear a shirt, an elegant top, a dress, a blouse or a polo shirt sleeve which is covering the shoulders. T-shirts are not permitted.

Dress pants will be clean and in good condition and may be of any color. Denim/blue jeans of any color are forbidden even though a jeans design is allowed. Female athletes may wear a skirt which must cover the knees.

Shoes must be elegant dress shoes that fit in the outfit. Sneakers and sandals are not allowed. Sports shoes with a dark top of leather or leather-like material are allowed but are subject to the tournament director's discretion.

## 4. Ball Rack Template

The Ball Rack Template can be used for the disciplines: 8-ball, 9-ball and 10-ball. In 14/1 it's not allowed to use the Ball Rack Template.

### 4.1 Positioning of the Ball Rack Template

The table must be marked before the tournament has started. A Vertical line must be drawn for the positioning of the Ball Rack Template. This line must be long enough to pass through the top and bottom holes on the Ball Rack Template.

### 4.2 Removing of the Ball Rack Template

After the break, the Ball Rack Template must be removed by the referee from the table as soon as possible without disturbing any of the balls. If a referee is not present and there are balls obstructing the removal of the Ball Rack Template, the opponent must be the one to remove the Ball Rack Template. If there are no obstructions, the player at the table may remove the Ball Rack Template without the opponent interfering.

With or without a referee present, the Ball Rack Template can only be removed if not more than 2 balls are an obstruction in its removal. Exception to this rule applies if 1 or more balls are frozen and obstructing the removal, in this case the Ball Rack Template stays in place until such time that the frozen balls are no longer an obstacle in the removal of the Ball Rack Template.

With the removal of the Ball Rack Template, the referee or opponent may use markers in the form of ball markers or chalk blocks which are at their disposal to mark the obstructing balls. The Ball Rack Template must be placed in its required spot away from the playing area including the rails and the balls placed back into their original position.

### 4.3 Specification for Ball Rack Template

Ball Rack template should be made of a plastic material, no thicker than 0.14 mm and shouldn't affect the table in any way. Template may not be glued on the playing surface.

## 5. Playing with an "Area" Referee

It may be that a tournament is being played with "area" referees who are each responsible for several tables and there is no referee constantly at each table. In this case, the players are still expected to observe all the rules of the game. The recommended way to conduct play in this situation is as follows.

The non-shooting player will perform all of the duties of the referee. If, prior to a particular shot, the shooting player feels that his opponent will not be able to properly judge the shot, he should ask the area referee to watch the shot. The non-shooting player may also ask for such attention if he feels that he is unable or is unwilling to rule on the shot. Either player has the power to suspend play until he is satisfied with the way the match is being refereed.

If a dispute arises between two players in an unrefereed match, and the area referee is asked to make a decision without having seen the cause of the dispute, he should be careful to understand the situation as completely as possible. This might include asking trusted witnesses, reviewing video tapes, or reenacting the shot. If the area referee is asked to determine whether a foul occurred and there is no evidence of the foul except the claim of one player while the other player claims that there was no foul, then it is assumed that no foul occurred.

## **6. Penalizing Unsportsmanlike Conduct**

The rules and regulations give the referee and other officials considerable latitude in penalizing unsportsmanlike conduct. Several factors should be considered in such decisions, including previous conduct, previous warnings, how serious the offense is, and information that the players may have been given at the Players' Meeting at the start of the tournament. In addition, the level of competition may be considered since players at the top levels can be expected to be fully familiar with the rules and regulations, while relative beginners may be unfamiliar with how the rules are normally applied.

## **7. Protest Ruling**

If a player needs a decision to be taken, the first person to be contacted is the referee. The referee will form his decision by all means that seem suitable to him. If the player wants to protest against that ruling, he may contact the head referee and after that the tournament director. In any regular tournament, the tournament director's decision is binding and final. In the WPA World Championships, there may be a further appeal to the WPA Sports Director, if he is present. A deposit of \$100 from the protestor is required for such an appeal and it will be forfeited in case of an adverse final decision.

A player is allowed to ask for a reconsideration of a factual decision by the referee only one time. If he asks for reconsideration of the same matter a second time, it will be treated as unsportsmanlike conduct.

## **8. Instructions for Referees**

The referee will determine all matters of fact relating to the rules, maintain fair playing conditions, call fouls, and take other action as required by these rules. The referee will suspend play when conditions do not permit fair play. Play will also be suspended when a call or ruling is being disputed. The referee will announce fouls and other specific situations as required by the rules. He will answer questions as required by the rules on matters such as foul count. He must not give advice on the application of the rules, or other points of play on which he is not required by the rules to speak. He may assist the player by getting and replacing the mechanical bridge. If necessary for the shot, the referee or a deputy may hold the light fixture out of the way.

When a game has a three-foul rule, the referee should note to the players any second foul at the time that it occurs and also when the player who is on two fouls returns to the table. The first warning is not required by the rules but is meant to prevent later misunderstandings. If there is a scoreboard on which the foul count is visible to the players, it satisfies the warning requirement.

## **9. Referee's Responsiveness**

The referee shall answer players' inquiries regarding objective data, such as whether a ball will be in the rack, whether a ball is behind the head string, what the count is, how many points are needed for a victory, if a player or his opponent is on a foul, what rule would apply if a certain shot is made, etc. When asked for a clarification of a rule, the referee will explain the applicable rule to the best of his ability, but any misstatement by the referee will not protect a player from enforcement of the actual rules. The referee must not offer or provide any subjective opinion that would affect play, such as whether a good hit can be made on a prospective shot, whether a combination can be made, or how the table seems to be playing, etc.

## 10. 8-Ball Addendum

If the groups have been determined and the player mistakenly shoots at and pockets a ball of the opponent's group, the foul must be called before he takes his next shot. Upon recognition by either player or the referee that the groups have been reversed, the rack will be halted and will be replayed with the original player executing the break shot.

## 11. Restoring a Position

In any case a position of balls needs to be amended it is solely the referee's duty and responsibility to perform this task. He may form his opinion by any means he considers appropriate at the time. He may consult one or both players on that, however, the particular player's opinion is not binding and his judgment can be amended. Each involved player has the right to dispute the referee's judgment just once, but after that it is the referee's discretion to restore the ball or balls.

## 12. Acceptance of Equipment

After the tournament or a particular match has been started, the player has no right to question the quality or legality of any equipment provided by the Tournament Organizer unless supported by the referee or the tournament director; any protests must be made beforehand.

## 13. Clearing Pockets

For the ball to be considered pocketed, it must meet all the requirements described in Rule 8.3 Ball Pocketed. Although the task of clearing pockets of balls lies within the referee's description of duties, the ultimate responsibility for any occurrence of fouls as a result of such misadministration always rests with the shooter. If the referee is absent, for example in the case of an area referee, the shooter may perform this duty himself, providing he makes his intention clear and obvious to the opponent.

## 14. Time Out

Unless specified otherwise by the tournament organizer, each player is allowed to take one time out of five minutes during matches played over 9 (for eight ball) and 13 (for nine ball) games. If matches are shorter there is no time out. To exercise his right to a time out the player must: (1) inform the referee of his intention and, (2) make sure the referee is aware of the fact and marks it on the score sheet and, (3) make sure the referee marks the table for suspended play. (The standard procedure will be to place a cue stick on the table.)

The opponent must remain seated as during normal play; should he involve himself in an action other than standard match-playing activities it will be considered exercising his time out and no further time out will be allowed.

The time out at eight ball and nine ball is taken between racks and play is suspended.

At 14.1, the time out begins between racks; and the player at the table may continue his inning should the opponent decide to take his time out. If the non-shooter takes a time out, he must make sure there is a referee to supervise the table during his absence; otherwise he has no right to protest against any misplay by the player at the table.

The player taking the time out should remember that his actions must be within the spirit of the game and if he acts otherwise, he is subject to a penalty under the Unsportsmanlike Conduct.

If a player is suffering from a medical condition, the tournament director may choose to adjust the number of time outs.

## 15. Subsequent Break Shots

For deciding who will break in racks after the first, in games such as nine ball, the tournament management may choose a procedure different from the standard one listed in the Rules. For example, the winner may break or the players may alternate “serves” of three consecutive breaks.

## 16. Rack at Nine Ball

As stated in Rule 2.2, balls other than the one and nine are placed randomly in the rack and should not be set in any particular order during any rack. If the referee is not racking, and a player believes that his opponent is intentionally placing balls within the rack, he may bring this to the attention of a tournament official. If the tournament official determines that the player is intentionally positioning balls in the rack, the player will be given an official warning to refrain from doing so. Once warned, should the player continue with intentional positioning of balls in the rack, he shall be penalized for unsportsmanlike conduct.

## 17. Open Break Requirements

The tournament management may set additional requirements on the break shot on games that require an “open” break such as nine ball or ten ball. For example, it may be required to place the cue ball for the break shot within one or several restricted areas behind the head string (“break box”).

## 18. The Three Point Break Rule

(1) On the break shot, a minimum of three object balls must either be pocketed, or touch the head string line, or a combination of both. For example, if one object ball is pocketed, then at least two object balls must touch the head string line; or if two object balls are pocketed, then at least one object ball must touch the head string line.

To touch the head string line means that the edge of the object ball must reach (break) the string line.

(2) If a player fails to meet the requirements in (1), but otherwise makes a legal break, the incoming player has the choice to accept the tables as is, or hand the shot back to his opponent.

(3) In accepting the table as is, the incoming player is not permitted to play a “push-out”, he must play a legal shot to the ball on.

(4) If the table is handed back to the breaker, the breaker is permitted to play a push-out. If so, his opponent will then have the choice to either 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 reposted before the next shot is played.

The three point rule must be present on all WPA ranking 9-ball events, together with tapping or ball rack.

## 19. Deflecting Cue Ball on Opening Break

It may be that the player miscues on a break shot and tries to prevent the cue ball from following its normal path by deflecting it with his cue stick or by some other means. This practice and other similar practices are absolutely forbidden under the unsportsmanlike conduct rule, Rule 6.16(b). Players must never intentionally touch any ball in play except with a forward stroke of the cue tip on the cue ball. The penalty for such a foul will be determined by the referee according to the unsportsmanlike conduct guidelines in Rule 6.16.

## 20. Shot Clock

A shot clock may be requested at any time during a match by a tournament official or either player involved in that match. The tournament director or other appointed official decides whether to use a shot clock or not. Should a shot clock be introduced, both players will be “on the clock” and there will be an official timekeeper for the duration of the match. As a recommendation, players will have 35 seconds per shot with a warning when 10 seconds remain. Each player will be allowed one 25-second extension during each rack. The shot clock will be started when all balls come to rest, including spinning balls. The shot clock will end when the cue tip strikes the cue ball to initiate a stroke or the when player’s time expires from the shot clock. If a player runs out of time, it will be a standard foul. After the opening shot the time cap may be extended but cannot exceed the 60 seconds.

## 21. Cue ball fouls only

If there is no referee presiding over a match, it may be played using cue ball fouls only. That is, touching or moving any ball other than the cue ball would not be a foul unless it changes the outcome of the shot by either touching another ball or having any ball, including the cue ball, going through the area originally occupied by the moved ball. If this does not happen, then the opposing player must be given the option of either leaving the ball where it lies or replacing the ball as near as possible to its original position to the agreement of both players. If a player shoots without giving his opponent the option to replace, it will be a foul resulting in cue ball in hand for the opponent.

## 22. Late Start

Players must be at the table and ready to play their assigned match at the appointed match time. If a player is late for his appointed match time, he will have fifteen minutes to report to his assigned table ready to play or he will lose the match. It is recommended to announce after five minutes a first call for the player, after ten minutes a second call and after fourteen minutes a final “one minute” warning. A stricter requirement may be used for repeat offenders.

## 23. Outside Interference

See Rule 1.9, Outside Interference. The referee should ensure that interference is prevented, for example by a spectator or a player on an adjacent table, and may suspend play as needed. Interference may be physical or verbal.

## **24. Coaching**

It is permitted for a player to receive advice from a coach during a match. This should not be on a continuous shot-by-shot basis that changes the nature of the game. It is up to the referee and tournament management to set additional limits on this. A time out can be used to get coaching help. The coach should not approach the table. If the referee decides that the coach is interfering with or disrupting the match, he may direct the coach to stay away from the match.

## **25. Act of God**

It may be that something unforeseen under these rules will occur during a match. In such a case, the referee will decide how to proceed in a fair manner. For example, it may be necessary to move a rack in progress to a different table, in which case a stalemate may be declared if a position cannot be transferred.

## **26. Remaining in Player's Chair**

The non-shooting player should remain in his designated chair while his opponent is at the table. Should a player need to leave the playing area during matches, he must request and receive permission from the referee. Should a player leave the playing area without the permission of the referee, it will be treated like unsportsmanlike conduct.

## **27. Split Hits**

If the cue ball strikes a legal object ball and a non-legal object ball at approximately the same instant, and it cannot be determined which ball was hit first, it will be assumed that the legal target was struck first.

## **28. Calling Frozen Balls**

The referee should be careful to inspect and announce the status of any object ball that might be frozen to a cushion and the cue ball when it might be frozen to a ball. The seated player may remind the referee that such a call is necessary. The shooter must allow time for such a determination to be asked for and made, and may ask for the call himself.