



The Official
APA/CPA
8-Ball & 9-Ball
Game Rules
Booklet

*The only pool league
endorsed by
Hall of Famer
"The Black Widow"
Jeanette Lee*



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APA/CPA 8-Ball Game Rules

General Description - 8-Ball is played with a cue ball and normal rack of 15 object balls. The primary purpose of this game is for one player to pocket the solid balls numbered from 1 to 7 or the striped balls numbered from 9 to 15, and then mark and pocket the 8-ball before his opponent. Choice of balls to be pocketed is made by the player legally pocketing the first ball of the game.

1. Lagging - Method used to start a match. Players simultaneously shoot a ball from behind the head string, banking it off the foot rail and back to the head of the table. Striking the side rails or any pocket results in loss of the lag. The closest ball to the head rail wins. It is permissible to strike the head rail. If the lagged balls make contact during the lag, re-lag.

2. Racking - All balls should be frozen (touching) as tightly as possible. Balls are racked with the front ball on the foot spot and the 8-ball in the center of the triangle. The breaking player may request and receive a rerack.

3. Breaking - To be a legal break, players must break from behind the head string. The head ball or the second row of balls must be struck first and at least four object balls must be driven to the rails or a ball must be pocketed. The cue ball may not be shot into a rail before the rack. If the rack is struck, but the break does **not** qualify as legal, the balls are reracked and rebroken by the same player. If the rack is struck, but the break does **not** qualify as legal and results in a scratch, the balls are reracked and broken by the opposite player. **THE RACK MUST BE STRUCK BEFORE A FOUL CAN OCCUR.** Breaking *safe* or *soft* is not allowed. The

League Operator may make judgments and issue penalties to teams and players who are not breaking hard. Breaking just hard enough to comply with this rule is not a guarantee against penalties. Remember, break as hard as you can with control.

4. After the Break - Various circumstances can occur upon completion of the break. They are:

- a. A foul on a legal break results in *ball-in-hand* behind the head string and the incoming player may shoot any ball outside the head string (see diagram of table in Team Manual for explanation). A ball that's dead center or "out" is playable. If it is "in", the ball is not playable. It is up to the opponent to call the cue ball "in" before it is shot. (See Team Manual for a more complete explanation.)
- b. No balls are pocketed and it is the other player's turn.
- c. The 8-ball is pocketed. This is a win, unless the player scratches, in which case he loses.
- d. A ball is pocketed; it is still the breaker's turn and he continues shooting the category of balls he just made.
- e. A ball of each category is pocketed (for example, the 6-ball and the 12-ball). Now the breaker has his choice. He may shoot any ball except the 8-ball (which would be a foul); if he does not foul, anything that goes in counts. If he were to make one of each on his second shot, he would still have an *open table* and the same choice as after the break. If he were to miss or foul on his second shot, his opponent would have

an *open table*. If the opponent then shoots and makes a ball, but also fouls on the shot, it is still an *open table*. *Open table* means a player can shoot a combination involving a stripe and a solid and whichever he makes, without committing a foul, would be his category.

- f. If two balls of one category and one ball of the other category are pocketed, it is the shooter's choice just as in "e" above.
- g. Occasionally, a player mistakenly starts shooting the wrong category of balls. Although it is sportsmanlike for the sitting player to remind the shooting player that he is about to foul by shooting the wrong category of balls, it is not a requirement for him to do so. Once the shooter has hit the wrong category of balls, the foul has occurred whether the ball is pocketed or not. If the ball is pocketed, it is permissible, though not recommended, for the sitting player to allow the shooting player to continue pocketing the wrong category of balls until he feels inclined to call the foul. The shooting player can escape penalty by quietly realizing his error and returning to shoot the correct category of balls and legally contacting one of them before his opponent calls foul, or by finishing off the wrong category of balls and legally contacting the 8-ball prior to his opponent calling a foul. In other words, the sitting player must call the foul before the shooter returns to the correct category and makes legal contact or before the shooter pockets the remaining balls of the wrong category and legally contacts the 8-ball. Once a player makes legal contact with the 8-ball, the player

assumes control of that category of wrongly pocketed balls and can win the game by pocketing the 8-ball. In addition, if the sitting player does not call a foul before his opponent's turn ends, and subsequently contacts the wrong category himself, both players will assume the new category of balls for the remainder of the game. Before any foul has occurred, the shooter also may avoid penalty by asking the sitting player which category of balls he has. The sitting player must tell him the truth.

5. Combination Shots - Combination shots are legal, but striking the correct ball first is required except in the *open table* situation. **The 8-ball is not neutral.** A player is credited with all balls he legally pockets. When a player does not pocket one of his balls but pockets an opponent's ball, he loses his turn. The opponent gets credit for the pocketed ball. No pocketed ball is ever spotted.

6. Balls on the Floor - Knocking the cue ball off the playing surface is a foul. If the 8-ball is knocked on the floor, it is loss of game. **Knocking any other object ball on the floor is not a foul.** Object balls that get knocked off the playing surface will be spotted on the foot spot. If the foot spot is taken, the ball will be placed on a line directly behind the foot spot as close to the foot spot as possible. If two or more balls are knocked on the floor, they are placed in numerical order with the lowest numbered ball closest to the foot spot; the placed balls will be frozen to one another. It might occur that a player legally pockets a ball while simultaneously knocking some other ball(s) on the floor. In this situation, it is still his turn and the ball(s) is not spotted until he misses. If the ball on the floor is one of the shooter's

balls, then it is spotted when the shooter has pocketed all of his other balls or misses.

7. Pocketed Balls - Balls must remain in a pocket to be legal. If a ball goes in a pocket, but bounces back onto the playing surface, it is not considered pocketed. If it is the 8-ball, it is not considered either a win or loss. If it is the cue ball, it is not considered a scratch.

Note: It occasionally happens on tables with small pockets that two balls become jammed in a pocket and are leaning over the edge of the slate to some degree. They are *off* the playing surface and are pocketed. Drop them in and resume playing the game unless the pocketing ends the game.

8. One Foot on the Floor - At least one foot must be on the floor at all times while shooting if a bridge is present. There is no foul, simply stop the shooter and hand him the bridge. League Management cannot guarantee the presence of bridges, and some Host Locations do not have them. If a bridge is not available, house rules prevail. **Exception:** Players shooting from a wheelchair must remain seated in their wheelchair while shooting.

9. Marking the Table - Marking refers to a physical alteration in the appearance of the cloth on a pool table. No one is allowed to mark the cloth. For example, using chalk to draw a line, or wetting your finger to dampen the cloth, is not allowed. It is permissible to set a piece of chalk on the hard surface of the rail.

10. Fouls - If any of the following fouls are committed, the penalty is *ball-in-hand* for the incoming player. Make certain you have *ball-in-hand* before you touch the cue ball.

Confirm it with your opponent before touching the cue ball. **Ball-in-hand** might be new for many members and therefore warrants further explanation. **Ball-in-hand** means you get to put the cue ball anywhere on the table (with the exception of a scratch on the break which results in ball-in-hand behind the head string), and shoot any of your balls (or the 8-ball, if all of your balls have been pocketed) regardless of where that ball is. A player exercising his rights under the **ball-in-hand** rule may place the cue ball on the table anywhere he desires.

Even after having addressed the cue ball a player may, if not satisfied with the placement, make further adjustments with his hand, cue stick or any other reasonable piece of equipment. A foul may be called only if the player fouls the cue ball while actually stroking at the cue ball, meaning a double hit of the cue ball (sometimes called double clutching). The **ball-in-hand** rule penalizes a player for an error. Without this rule, a person can actually benefit by accidentally or purposely scratching or otherwise fouling. In the unlikely event that a game should ever become **stalemated**, meaning that neither player wants or can make use of **ball-in-hand**, then the balls are reracked, the same player breaks and the innings for the **stalemated** game are crossed off the scoresheet.

ONLY THE PLAYER OR THE TEAM CAPTAIN MAY OFFICIALLY CALL A FOUL, although anyone may suggest to the player or the team captain that a foul should be called.

These are the only fouls resulting in **ball-in-hand**. All other violations are sportsmanship violations. The **ball-in-hand fouls** are as follows:

- a. Anytime during a shot, the cue ball goes in a pocket, on the floor, or otherwise ends up off the playing surface.
- b. Failure to hit a correct ball first. (A player who is shooting stripes must hit a striped ball first.) **The 8-ball is not neutral.** In general, the shooter has the advantage in close hit situations unless his opponent has asked an outside party to watch the hit. Protect yourself. If you think your opponent is getting ready to shoot a shot that could possibly be a bad hit, stop him from shooting and get someone to watch the shot. Potential **bad hit** situations are usually fairly obvious and protests and disputes over these close situations can almost always be avoided if someone is asked to watch the shot. If the outside party cannot determine which ball was struck first, the call goes to the shooter. Teams involved in repeatedly calling bad hits without outside party verification may be subject to penalty points for disruptive unsportsmanlike behavior.
- c. Failure to hit a rail after contact. A rail must be hit by either the cue ball or any other ball after the cue ball and the object ball make contact. A pocketed ball counts as a rail. Even if the ball bounces back onto the playing surface, it is considered to have hit a rail, as the pocket liner is part of the rail. A sentence that should answer many questions is: **ANY ball must go to a rail AFTER LEGAL contact.**
- d. The object ball is **frozen** to a rail and the player is contemplating playing a **safety**. In order for the **frozen ball** rule to be in effect, the opponent must

declare that the ball is *frozen* and the player should verify. Once it is agreed the ball is frozen the player must drive the object ball to another rail (of course, it could hit another ball, which in turn hits a rail), or drive the cue ball to a rail after it touches the object ball. If the latter method of *safety* is chosen then the player should take care that he quite obviously strikes the object ball first. If the cue ball strikes the rail first or appears to hit both the rail and ball simultaneously, then it would be a foul unless either the cue ball or object ball went to some other rail.

- e. It is illegal and, therefore, a foul to jump a cue ball over another ball by cuing it up in the air (scooping) on purpose.
- f. Receiving illegal aid (coaching from person(s) other than the coach) during your turn at the table. It is not considered illegal aid to remind a player to mark the pocket when shooting the 8-ball, or to tell a player a foul has occurred. Anyone may do so.
- g. Causing even the slightest movement or altering the course of the cue ball, even accidentally, is a foul. Even dropping the chalk on the cue ball is a foul. It is not a foul, however, to accidentally move any other balls (including the 8-ball) unless, during his turn at the table, a player moves a ball and it in turn comes in contact with the cue ball. Any balls moved accidentally during a shot **must be replaced** by the opponent after the shot is over and all balls have stopped rolling. If it occurs before the shot, it **must be replaced** by the opponent before the shot is taken.

Exception: If an accidentally moved ball comes in contact with the cue ball, creating a foul, no object ball will be replaced.

- h. If, during the course of a shot, the cue ball does not touch anything.
- i. Exercise caution when picking up or placing the cue ball in a *ball-in-hand* situation. The cue ball is always *alive*. If the cue ball, **or the hand holding or moving it**, touches another ball it is a cue ball foul and your opponent has *ball-in-hand*. Be especially careful when you are picking up or placing the cue ball in a tight spot.
- j. The player or his coach (during a coaching time-out) **may** place the cue ball in a *ball-in-hand* situation. The same rule regarding placing the cue ball applies to the coach as applies to the player. If the player, or coach fouls in the process of placing the cue ball, it will be *ball-in-hand* for the opponent. Therefore, it should be the player's choice if he wishes to place the cue ball or allow his coach to do so.

11. There are various ways to lose:

- a. Your opponent pockets his numerical group and legally pockets the 8-ball.
- b. You pocket the 8-ball out of turn or knock it on the floor.
- c. When playing the 8-ball, you pocket the 8-ball in the wrong pocket or fail to properly mark the pocket where the 8-ball went in.

d. You foul the cue ball and then pocket the 8-ball.

e. When playing the 8-ball, you scratch. You lose whether or not you pocket the 8-ball.

Note: If you are shooting at the 8-ball and miss it altogether without scratching, you have fouled and your opponent has *ball-in-hand*, but you don't lose because of this foul.

f. A game is forfeited if you alter the course of the 8-ball or the cue ball in a game losing situation.

12. How to Win - You have won the game when all the balls of your numerical group have been pocketed and you have legally pocketed the 8-ball in a properly marked pocket without scratching. To properly mark the pocket, a coaster or some other reasonable marker (to avoid confusion, although it is permissible, we do not recommend marking the pocket with chalk) must be placed next to the pocket the 8-ball is intended to enter. Both teams may use the same marker. Only one marker should be on the table. However, if more than one marker is on the table, as long as you clearly mark the pocket where you intend to pocket the 8-ball you have properly marked the pocket. If the marker is already at the intended pocket from a previous attempt or game, it is not necessary for you to touch it, pick it up, or reposition it.

Note: You cannot play the 8-ball while simultaneously playing the last ball of your category. The 8-ball must be a separate shot.

APA/CPA 9-Ball Game Rules

9-Ball is for everyone! Here's your chance to play the same game the pros play and have a great chance at winning.

General Description - 9-Ball is played with a cue ball and nine object balls numbered 1 through 9. 9-Ball is a rotation game, meaning the balls are shot in numerical order. The shooter must strike the lowest numbered ball on the table first. The game is over when the 9-ball is pocketed. A player retains his turn at the table as long as he strikes the lowest numbered ball first and legally pockets a ball. He need not pocket the lowest numbered ball to continue shooting. He may, for example, shoot the 1-ball into the 4-ball thus pocketing the 4. He would continue shooting and must, once again, strike the 1-ball first. **If the shooter shoots the 1-ball into the 9-ball and the 9-ball is pocketed without committing a foul, the game is over.**

1. Lagging - The same as 8-Ball.

2. Racking - Nine balls are used and are racked in a diamond shape. The **1-ball is at the front of the rack and on the foot spot.** The **9-ball is in the center** and the rest of the object balls can be placed in any numerical order. All balls should be frozen (touching) as tightly as possible. The breaking player may request and receive a rerack.

Note 1: When using coin-operated tables, save some money by using all the balls in the event of a short game. Example: If the 3 and 9 are made on the break, the balls are reracked (because a 9-on-the-Snap is a winner) using the 10 and 11 balls. The sequence in the next game is 1,2,4,5,6,7,8,10,11. The 11, in effect, is the "9-ball" (last ball) in this game. Do not say the 10 replaces the 3; it is too confusing. Shoot the balls in numerical order.

Note 2: The breaker can demand that the lowest available nine balls be used each game.

3. Breaking - To be a legal break, players must break from behind the head string. The head ball must be struck first and at least four object balls must be driven to the rails or a ball must be pocketed. The cue ball may not be shot into a rail before the rack. Failure to strike the 1-ball first does not result in a foul. If the break does **not** qualify as legal, the balls are reracked and broken by the same player. If the rack is struck, but the break does **not** qualify as legal and results in a scratch, the balls are reracked and broken by the opposite player. **THE RACK MUST BE STRUCK BEFORE A FOUL CAN OCCUR.** Breaking *safe* or *soft* is not allowed. The League Operator may make judgments and issue penalties to teams and players who are not breaking hard. Breaking just hard enough to comply with this rule is not a guarantee against penalties. Remember, break as hard as you can with control.

4. After the Break - Various circumstances can occur upon completion of the break. They are:

- a. A foul on a legal break will result in **ball-in-hand** anywhere on the table for the breaker's opponent. Pocketed balls, if any, stay down (are not spotted), except the 9-ball.
- b. No balls are pocketed and it is the other player's turn.
- c. The 9-ball is pocketed. This is a win unless the player scratches, in which case the 9-ball (any other available high numbered ball is adequate) is spotted and the turn passes to his opponent.

d. A ball or a number of balls are pocketed. It is still the breaker's turn and he shoots at the lowest numbered ball on the table.

e. Occasionally it occurs that a player mistakenly shoots the wrong ball. Although it is sportsmanlike for the sitting player to remind the shooting player he is about to foul by shooting the wrong ball, he is not required to do so. Once the shooter has hit the wrong ball, the foul has occurred whether the ball is pocketed or not. If the ball is pocketed, it is permissible, though not recommended, that the sitting player allow the shooting player to continue shooting until he feels inclined to call the foul. Any balls pocketed prior to the foul being called will be marked as "dead balls." The shooting player can escape penalty by quietly realizing his error and returning to shoot the correct ball and striking it first on a shot prior to his opponent calling the foul. In other words, the sitting player must call the foul before the shooter has shot the correct ball.

Note: Push-outs are fairly standard in pro events and in the U.S. Amateur (conducted by the APA); however, APA rules for all handicapped competition does not allow push-outs.

5. Combination Shots - Combination shots are legal and extremely common in 9-Ball. **Just make sure to hit the lowest numbered ball on the table first.**

6. Balls on the Floor - Knocking the cue ball off the playing surface is a foul. **Knocking an object ball on the floor is not a foul.** Object balls that get knocked off the playing surface will be **immediately** spotted on the foot

spot. If the foot spot is taken, the ball will be placed on a line directly behind the foot spot as close to the foot spot as possible. If two or more balls are knocked on the floor, they are placed in numerical order with the lowest numbered ball closest to the foot spot. Spotted balls are frozen to one another. It might occur that a player legally pockets a ball while simultaneously knocking some other ball(s) on the floor. In this situation, the ball(s) is spotted and the player continues shooting until he misses.

7. Pocketed Balls - Balls must remain in a pocket to be legal. If a ball goes in a pocket but bounces back onto the playing surface, it is not considered pocketed.

Note: It occasionally happens on tables with small pockets that two balls become jammed in a pocket and are leaning over the edge of the slate to some degree. They are *off* the playing surface and are pocketed. Drop them in and resume playing the game unless the pocketing ends the game.

8. Spotting Balls - Other than the circumstances described in **Balls on the Floor**, the only ball that will ever be spotted will be the 9-ball when the shooter has pocketed the 9-ball and scratched or otherwise fouled. If the shooter makes the 9-ball on the break and fouls or scratches, the 9-ball (and only the 9-ball) is spotted. If the shooter is shooting at the object ball and plays it into the 9-ball and pockets the 9-ball, but scratches or otherwise fouls in the process, the 9-ball is spotted. The incoming player has *ball-in-hand* and will be shooting at the lowest numbered ball on the table.

Note: If a ball which has been *hanging* in a pocket for more than a few seconds suddenly falls in, it is to be placed back on the table where it was originally.

9. Fouls - If any of the following fouls are committed, the penalty is *ball-in-hand* for the incoming player. Make certain you have *ball-in-hand* before you touch the cue ball by confirming with your opponent. *Ball-in-hand* means you are allowed to place the cue ball anywhere on the table and shoot the lowest numbered ball on the table. Even after having addressed the cue ball, a player may, if not satisfied with the placement, make further adjustments with the hand, cue stick or any other reasonable piece of equipment. A foul may be called only if the player fouls while actually stroking at the cue ball, meaning a double hit of the cue ball (sometimes called double clutching).

The *ball-in-hand* rule penalizes a player for an error. Without this rule, a player could benefit by accidentally or purposely scratching or otherwise fouling.

ONLY THE PLAYER OR THE TEAM CAPTAIN MAY OFFICIALLY CALL A FOUL, although anyone may suggest to the player or the team captain that a foul should be called.

These are the only fouls resulting in *ball-in-hand*. All other violations are sportsmanship violations. The *ball-in-hand fouls* are as follows:

- a. Anytime during a shot, the cue ball goes in a pocket, on the floor, or otherwise ends up off the playing surface.
- b. Failure to hit the correct ball first. (The correct ball is always the lowest numbered ball on the table.) The shooter has the advantage in these situations unless his opponent has asked an outside party to watch the hit. Protect yourself. If you think your opponent is

attempting a shot that could result in a bad hit, get someone to watch the shot before he starts shooting. Teams involved in repeatedly calling bad hits without outside party verification may be subject to penalty points for disruptive unsportsmanlike behavior.

- c. Failure to hit a rail after contact. A sentence that should answer many questions is: “Any ball (including the cue ball) must go to a rail AFTER LEGAL contact.” A pocketed ball counts as a rail.
- d. The object ball is frozen to a rail and the player is contemplating playing a “safety.” In order for the “frozen ball” rule to be in effect, the opponent must declare the ball frozen and the player should verify. Once it is agreed the ball is frozen the player must drive the object ball to another rail (of course, it could hit another ball, which in turn hits a rail) or drive the cue ball to a rail after it touches the object ball. If the latter method of safety is chosen the player should be sure to obviously strike the object ball first. If the cue ball strikes the rail first or appears to hit both the rail and ball simultaneously, it is a foul unless either the cue ball or object ball went to some other rail.
- e. It is illegal and, therefore, a foul to jump a cue ball over another ball by cuing it up in the air (scooping) on purpose.
- f. Receiving illegal aid (coaching from person(s) other than the coach) during your turn at the table.
- g. Causing even the slightest movement or altering the course of the cue ball, even accidentally, is a foul.

Even dropping the chalk on the cue ball is a foul. It is not a foul, however, to accidentally move any other balls unless, during his turn at the table, a player moves a ball and it in turn comes in contact with the cue ball. Any balls moved accidentally during a shot **must be replaced** by the opponent after the shot is over and all balls have stopped rolling. If it occurs before the shot, it **must be replaced** by the opponent before the shot is taken.

Exception: If an accidentally moved ball comes in contact with the cue ball, creating a foul, no object ball will be replaced.

- h. If, during the course of a shot, the cue ball does not touch anything.
- i. Use caution when picking up or placing the cue ball in a **ball-in-hand** situation. The cue ball is always alive. If the cue ball, or the hand holding it or moving it, touches another ball it is a cue ball foul and your opponent has **ball-in-hand**. Be especially careful when picking up or placing the cue ball in a tight spot.
- j. The player or his coach (during a coaching time-out) may place the cue ball in a **ball-in-hand** situation. The same rule regarding placing the cue ball applies to the coach as applies to the player. If the player, or coach fouls in the process of placing the cue ball, it will be **ball-in-hand** for the opponent. Therefore, it should be the player’s choice if he wishes to place the cue ball or allow his coach to do so.