



**UNITED STATES  
PROFESSIONAL  
POOLPLAYERS  
ASSOCIATION**

The Evolution of Pool™

**Official UPA Rulebook  
for Amateur 8-Ball  
2026 Edition**

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## UPA 8-Ball Rules

### INTRODUCTION

UPA Rules are consistent nationwide and are designed to produce fair, orderly, and challenging league night play for all members. The UPA does not recognize, nor allow variation(s), documents or local bylaw(s) of any kind.

### 1.0 OBJECT OF THE GAME

The object of 8-ball is to win by legally pocketing the 8-ball.

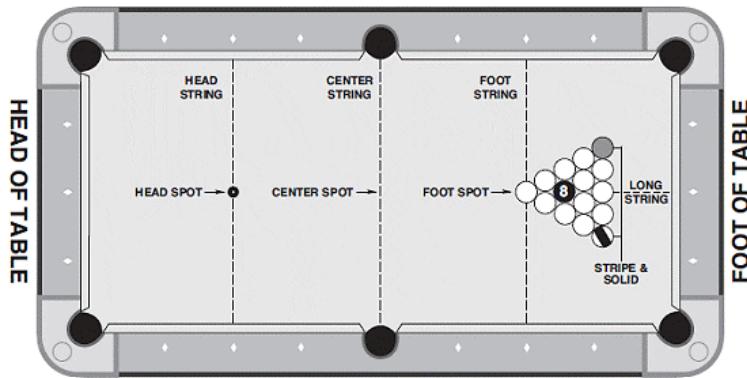
8-Ball is played with a cue ball and fifteen object balls, numbered 1 through 15. Balls 1–7 are solid colors and commonly referred to as “low balls”, and balls 9–15 are striped and commonly referred to as “high balls.” One player must pocket balls of solid colors, while the other player must pocket the striped balls. The player who pockets their entire group and then legally pockets the 8-ball wins the game.

### 2.0 LAG FOR BREAK

The player with the lowest Speed (Rating) shall break first with an alternating break format taking place thereafter. In the event that two players with equal Speeds play, a “Lag for Break” shall determine who breaks first with an alternating break format taking place thereafter. Winner of lag is the player whose ball is closer to head of the rail.

#### 2.1 How to Rack

The balls are racked randomly with the base of the rack is parallel to the short end of the pool table and is positioned so the ball in the tip of the rack is located on the center of the foot spot. Within the rack, the 8-ball is centered while the two corners are occupied by the two opposite groups (one solid ball and one striped ball).



**NOTE:** Tables may have flaws that do not allow for acceptable racks directly upon the foot spot. In these cases, players are permitted to rack within a dime's radius of the direct foot spot to achieve a solid rack. Touching or positioning of balls after the rack has been removed is never permitted (exception magic rack). Player must re-rack if this occurs (see 9.5, Ball Tapping).

## 2.2 Rack Your Own

When there is no official available, each breaking player shall be responsible for providing themselves a legal and solid rack.

## 3.0 LEGAL BREAK SHOT

For the break shot to be legal, the breaker (with the base of the cue ball placed anywhere behind the head string) must either pocket a number ball or drive at least four (4) number balls to one or more rails. No ball is called, and the cue ball is not required to hit any particular object ball first. If the breaker fails to make the legal break requirement, the balls will be re-racked and the opponent shall have the option of breaking or requesting the offending player to break again.

**NOTE:** the cue ball is touched by the cue tip and does not meet the legal break requirement, it is considered an "illegal break."

Break Fouls Include:

1. If the cue ball is potted or driven off the table
2. If any numbered ball leaves the table or comes to rest on top of a rail..

**Game play after a Legal Break:** When any numbered ball is potted on a legal break the breaking player is to continue their inning.

**Foul On Break:** If the breaker makes a legal break, however, commits a foul, the game is to continue with the opponent having ball in hand anywhere behind the head-string, however must shoot an object ball beyond the head-string (outside of the "kitchen") or it is a foul.

## 4.0 8-BALL POCKETED ON THE BREAK

### 4.1 Game Win

Legally pocketing the 8-ball on the break wins the game for the breaker.

### 4.2 Game Loss

Pocketing the 8-ball on the break with a simultaneous foul results in a loss of game.

## 5.0 OPEN TABLE

The table is always open immediately after the break shot. The player's designated group (solids or stripes) will not be determined until a player legally pockets a called object ball. The table is considered an "open" table when the choice of groups (solid or stripes) has not yet been determined. When the table is open, it is legal to hit one group of balls in order to pocket another ball from the opposite group.

**NOTE:** The 8-ball may be utilized in a combination as long as it is not struck first; this action would result in a foul.

## 6.0 CONTINUING PLAY – CALL POCKET

8-Ball is a "Call Pocket" game and the shooter it is encouraged to specify all balls along with their intended pocket. However, obvious balls and their respective pockets do not have to be specified. Any bank shot (object ball to rail), kick shot (rail(s) to object ball), or combinations (2 or more balls from either group) must be called to their designated pocket, or they are considered a miss. When a player successfully pockets the designated object balls, they continue their inning until either a miss, foul or win occurs.

Call pocket notes:

- a) It is never necessary to specify details such as the number of banks, kisses, caroms, rails, etc.
- b) Any balls pocketed, legally or illegally, will remain pocketed, regardless of the group (stripe or solid).
- c) The break shot is never considered a "called shot."
- d) A ball must hit a rail, or go into a pocket after contact with the cue ball (see 7.4, No Rail).

## 7.0 BALL IN HAND FOUL PENALTIES

When a player commits a ball in hand foul, they must relinquish their turn and the incoming player may now place the cue ball anywhere on the table to start their inning. If a player commits more than one foul on one shot, only one foul will be called.

### 7.1 Cue Ball Fouls Only

a) **Striking/Touching the cue ball:** Hitting an object ball, previously or simultaneously, upon striking the cue ball is a foul.

Touching or causing even the slightest movement of the cue ball (other than a normal shot), even accidentally, is a foul. A player may use the ferrule or shaft of the cue to position the 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 or allowing a moving ball to hit a foreign object is a ball in hand foul. If the accidental movement of a ball(s) results in the disturbed ball(s) being struck by any moving balls in play, it results in a ball in hand foul.

c) **Touching a still object ball:** Any still object ball moved can only be moved back to its original position with the permission of the opponent. The opponent may exercise the option of keeping disturbed ball(s) in new position if they so choose. Only after receiving consent from the opponent, the player who has committed the error may move the disturbed object ball(s) back to original position. If the player who has committed the infraction 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.

**NOTE:** If the 8-ball was pocketed the result shall be a loss of game.

### 7.2 Scratch

Pocketing the cue ball or driving it off the table is a ball in hand foul. Scratching on the 8-ball is not a loss of game as long as the 8-ball was not pocketed.

## 7.3 Bad Hit

If the first object ball contacted by the cue ball is not a numbered ball from the shooter's established group, it is a ball in hand foul.

**NOTE:** If the shooter has no remaining balls from their group in play, the 8-ball effectively becomes the shooter's object ball.

## 7.4 No Rail

If after the cue ball 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. A "Frozen" (touching) object ball to the rail does not meet this requirement by virtue of it not "hitting" a rail.

**NOTE:** Players are encouraged to mutually acknowledge when the object ball is "Frozen" (touching) to the rail.

## 7.5 Balls off the Table

Causing any ball to come to rest off the playing surface is a foul and any such ball(s) are pocketed. 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 and the ball returns to the playing surface after hitting a person or an object, it is a foul (the ball remains on surface). If no object or person was contacted, then normal rules of play apply once the ball returns to the playing surface.

**NOTE:** If a player removes the 8-ball from the pool table, it results in a loss of game.

## 7.6 Foot on the Floor

Failure to have at least one foot touching 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 is a ball in hand 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. In order to avoid a double hit, the cue ball must be struck at a minimum of a 45° angle whenever in contact with or riskily close (1/2 inch or closer) to the intended object ball.

**NOTE:** Calling a referee to watch “the hit” is always preferable. The referee shall assume that a foul has been committed if the 45° rule was not utilized by the shooter.

## 7.10 Head String

The base of the cue ball must be behind 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 a ball in hand foul.

## 7.12 Interference

While the shooting player is at the table, the non-shooting player (including teammates), cannot disturb, make noises, move around, cause distraction (shark) in any way. All players must conduct themselves in a respectful manner consistent with that of a professional, or it may result in an “Official Warning” by a UPA representative or tournament official followed by the calling of a foul (ball in hand) for interference.

**NOTE:** It is understood that the match is between the two players and teammates are not permitted to instruct unless called upon by the shooting player for a Rules Clarification or Time Out (see 8.6, Coaching Assistance).

## 7.13 Marking the Table

Marking the table in any way that 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 Playing Out of Turn

If/when a player shoots out of turn and it is brought to the attention of the offending shooter, the rightful player is to return to the table and continue without any penalties/fouls. It is the responsibility of both players to assume control of the table on their proper inning.

## 7.15 Wrong Balls Pocketed

When it is discovered that the shooting player has been shooting the opponent's designated ball(s) as if it were their own, the shooter shall relinquish the table with a ball in hand foul to the opponent.

## **8.0 LOSS OF GAME**

### **8.1 Opponent Wins**

The opponent legally pockets the 8-ball.

### **8.2 Three Consecutive Fouls – Pro Only**

**IMPORTANT:** This rule is not utilized in amateur league play.

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 the same game. After the 2nd foul has been committed, the opponent must verbally warn the shooter that they have committed their 2nd foul. A 3rd foul will result in a loss of game.

**NOTE:** If the shooter is not warned after the 2nd foul and commits a 3rd, it will not be a loss of game. The opponent must again warn the shooter that the next foul committed will result in a loss of game.

### **8.3 Conceding a Game**

Any concession of game, for any reason, is considered a loss for the offending player.

### **8.4 Concession of a Match**

Unscrewing any cues during the last game, putting on a jacket, leaving the room, or undertaking any other actions which would indicate that the match is over, is considered a forfeiture of the match (consult UPA representative or tournament official).

### **8.5 Ball Tapping**

Tapping balls is not permitted. After an “Official Warning” by a UPA representative or tournament official has been granted to the offender, the penalty for ball tapping shall be the loss of the current game. Only tournament officials may tap in balls when warranted.

## 8.6 Coaching Assistance

During their inning and only once per game, only the shooting player may call a “Time Out” that shall last no more than a two (2) minute period. During this time the player may receive instruction from an available teammate. Otherwise a player who receives advice (anytime) shall grant a ball in hand foul to the opponent. And on the second (2nd) infraction shall grant the current game in favor of the opponent by a forfeit.

**Calling a Time Out:** When the shooting player calls a “Time Out” they are to select an available team member to immediately assist them without conferring with other parties.

## 8.7 Forfeits

Players are allotted fifteen (15) minutes to begin their match, or the match is considered forfeited.

**NOTE:** Once a match is scheduled to start and a fifteen (15) minute count is desired, the opponent is to notify a tournament official, or UPA representative for an official count.

# 9.0 GENERAL POOL RULES

## 9.1 Shot Clock

Shot Clock implementation is at the sole discretion of the UPA, its representatives or tournament officials. When a shot clock is utilized it shall be used for both players competing in the following manner:

Each shooting player is allotted one (1) minute per shot, or a “ball in hand” foul shall be granted to the opponent. The shot clock begins when all balls come to rest. The time keeper (designated by UPA) shall call out “Ten Seconds” once the fifty (50) second mark has been reached, unless the shooter is down on the shot in preparation to shoot. Once one (1) minute has been reached on the shot clock, the shooter must either be stroking or have shot. If the shooter rises (gets off the shot) without execution after the one (1) minute mark has been reached, it shall result in a “ball in hand” foul to the opponent.

## 9.2 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.

## 9.3 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 8-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.

## 9.4 Hanging Ball

If any ball hangs in a pocket and drops within 5 seconds after coming to complete rest, the ball is considered to be pocketed. If a hanging ball drops in the pocket after being at rest for more than 5 seconds, the ball is returned to the original position on the edge, and the incoming player may begin. Both players will have the opportunity to argue their case. The referee's decision is final.

## 9.5 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 pocketed balls, it is considered pocketed if the removal of the supporting ball(s) would cause the supported/suspended ball(s) to fall into the pocket. Tournament officials are the sole judges of whether this rule applies to any situation.

## 9.6 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.

## 9.7 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, forcing 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 UPA.

## 9.8 Use of Equipment

All equipment that is generally accepted throughout the industry is permitted. However, 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 each piece of equipment is: the bridge, jump cues, extensions, etc.

**NOTE:** The use of headphones and other devices are not permitted. The use of racks and balls not provided by the venue must be agreed upon by both players.

## 9.9 SAFETY PLAY

A player may choose to pocket an object ball and discontinue their inning by declaring “safety” to the opponent prior to the shot. The player calling “safety” must be sure that the opponent is aware of the declaration or may be forced to continue playing after a ball is pocketed.

## 9.10 STALEMATE

If in 3 consecutive innings by each player, the players purposefully foul or scratch because both players agree that any attempt to pocket or move an object ball would result in a loss of the game, then the game is considered a stalemate and another game is played.

# 10.0 TOURNAMENT DIRECTOR/REFEREES

## 10.1 Player Responsibility

It is the responsibility of each member to be aware of all rules, regulations, and schedules relating to 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 rule clarifications during league play. This is not considered a “Time Out.”

## 10.2 Referees

The League Operator (or representatives) will perform the duties of a referee in the event that referees are busy or not utilized. If the Tournament Director, their assistants, or a referee cannot be found within a reasonable time frame, a spectator may sub as an official referee when agreed upon by both players and in accordance with UPA rules.

## 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/calling fouls (including on themselves), and insuring adherence to UPA rules of competition. Both players may agree on an audience member (familiar with UPA rules) 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 or agreed upon third (3rd) party 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, they are responsible for seeking immediate clarification from league officials or the rulebook before play continues. After play continues, it is unlikely that a problem can be remedied.

**NOTE:** If a tournament official or third (3rd) party was not utilized, “the call” shall be left to the shooter without further discussion.

## 10.5 Scoring

Players are encouraged to score their own matches to ensure accuracy, however a third (3rd) party is permitted. The scorer is charged to accurately record what actually took place on the pool table and may clarify with the shooter what the intention was whenever needed. A player always has the right to consult the Scorecard with the scorekeeper. Any disagreements shall be determined by a UPA representative.

**NOTE:** If it is believed a player is purposely calling a pocket, however actually playing a safe, then a safety (S) shall be recorded.

## 10.6 Advice vs. Rules Clarification

The referee must never give advice nor offer an opinion on points of play. Only when asked for clarification of a rule will the referee then explain that specific rule. Any incorrect statement made 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.

## 10.7 Prompting Official Warnings

If either player has the opinion that the referee is failing to issue a mandatory “Official Warning,” they may remind the referee that such a warning is necessary.

## 10.8 Calling Fouls

The referee will call all fouls as soon as they occur and will inform the incoming player that they have ball in hand.

## 10.9 Protesting Fouls

If a player believes that the referee has failed to call a foul, he must protest to the referee before their opponent takes the next shot. If the player fails to do so, the foul is considered to have not occurred.

## 10.10 Restoring Position

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

## 10.11 Verification

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

## 10.12 Replay of Game

A replay of game is only warranted under the following unique circumstance;

- Table Failure; torn cloth, balls stuck in pocket, etc.

## 10.13 Resolving Disputes

Any disagreement between the two players will be resolved by the League Operator or appointed representatives, or any administrative member of the UPA.

# 11.0 SPECIAL RULINGS

Any rule or situation not covered in this text shall be decided in an expedient manner by the League Operator, appointed representatives or any administrative member of the UPA in accordance with UPA ideals and guidelines for the purposes of league play to continue. Such expedient rulings shall then be made known to the administration of the UPA Corporate Office and its Touring Professionals before further instruction or implementation of the matter is finalized.

## 11.1 Bylaws

These rules are consistent nationwide and are not to be altered in any way, shape, or form. The implementation of any “Bylaws,” or any other document, is strictly prohibited by UPA Corporate Office.

## 11.2 Addendum

From time to time there may be an addendum issued by the UPA to the UPA Official Rule Book, and it is each Member’s and individual player’s responsibility to keep current.