

14.1 Continuous Straight Pool Rules

1. General Rules

The following General Rules apply to all the games covered by these rules except when contradicted by specific game rules. In addition, the Regulations of Pool Billiards cover aspects of the game not directly related to the game rules, such as equipment specifications and organization of events.

The games of Pool Billiards are played on a flat table covered with cloth and bounded by rubber cushions. The player uses a stick (pool cue) to strike a cue ball which in turn strikes object balls. The goal is to drive object balls into six pockets located at the cushion boundary. The games vary according to which balls are legal targets and the requirements to win a match.

[Editorial comments 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. The word “game” is used to refer to a discipline such as nine ball rather than a rack or a match.]

1.1 Player's Responsibility

It is the player's responsibility to be aware of all rules, regulations and schedules applying to competition. While tournament officials will make every reasonable effort to have such information readily available to all players as appropriate, the ultimate responsibility rests with the player.

1.2 Lagging to Determine Order of Play

The lag is the first shot of the match and determines order of play. The player who wins the lag chooses who will shoot first.

The referee will place a ball on each side of the table behind the head string and near the head string. The players will shoot at about the same time to make each ball contact the foot cushion with the goal of returning the ball closer to the head cushion than the opponent.

A lag shot is bad and cannot win if the shooter's ball:

- (a)) crosses the long string;
- (b) contacts the foot cushion other than once;
- (c)) is pocketed or driven off the table;
- (d) touches the side cushion; or
- (e) the ball rests within the corner pocket and past the nose of the head cushion.

In addition, a lag will be bad if any non-object-ball foul occurs other than [6.9 Balls Still Moving](#).

The players will lag again if:

- (a)) a player's ball is struck after the other ball has touched the foot cushion;
- (b) the referee cannot determine which ball has stopped closer to the head cushion; or
- (c)) both lags are bad.

1.3 Player's Use of Equipment

The equipment must meet existing WPA equipment specifications. In general, players are not permitted to introduce novel equipment into the game. The following uses, among others, are considered normal. If the player is uncertain about a particular use of equipment, he should discuss it with the tournament management prior to the start of play. The equipment must be used only for the purpose or in the manner that the equipment was intended. (See [6.17 Unsportsmanlike Conduct](#).)

- (a) Cue Stick – The player is permitted to switch between cue sticks during the match, such as break, jump and normal cues. He may use either a built-in extender or an add-on extender to increase the length of the stick.
- (b) Chalk – The player may apply chalk to his tip to prevent miscues, and may use his own chalk, provided its color is compatible with the cloth.
- (c) Mechanical Bridges – The player may use up to two mechanical bridges to support the cue stick during the shot. The configuration of the bridges is up to the player. He may use his own bridge if it is similar to standard bridges.
- (d) Gloves – The player may use gloves to improve the grip and/or bridge hand function.
- (e) Powder – A player is allowed to use powder in a reasonable amount as determined by the referee.

1.4 Spotting Balls

Balls are spotted (returned to play on the table) by placing them on the long string (long axis of the table) as close as possible to the foot spot and between the foot spot and the foot rail, without moving any interfering ball. If the spotted ball cannot be placed on the foot spot, it should be placed in contact (if possible) with the corresponding interfering ball. However, when the cue ball is next to the spotted ball, the spotted ball should not be placed in contact with the cue ball; a small separation must be maintained. If all of the long string below the foot spot is blocked by other balls, the ball is spotted above the foot spot, and as close as possible to the foot spot.

1.5 Cue Ball in Hand

When the cue ball is in hand, the shooter may place the cue ball anywhere on the playing surface (see [8.1 Parts of the Table](#)) and may continue to move the cue ball until he executes a shot. (See definition [8.2 Shot](#).) Players may use any part of the cue stick to move the cue ball, including the tip, but not with a forward stroke motion. In some games and for most break shots, placement of the cue ball may be restricted to the area behind the head string depending on the rules of the game, and then [6.10 Bad Cue Ball Placement](#) and [6.11 Bad Play from Behind the Head String](#) may apply.

When the shooter has the cue ball in hand behind the head string and all the legal object balls are behind the head string, he may request the legal object ball nearest the head string to be spotted. If two or more balls are equal distance from the head string, the shooter may designate which of the equidistant balls is to be spotted. An object ball that rests exactly on the head string is playable.

1.6 Standard Call Shot

In games in which the shooter is required to call shots, the intended ball and pocket must be indicated for each shot if they are not obvious. Details of the shot, such as cushions struck or other balls contacted or pocketed are irrelevant. Only one ball may be called on each shot.

For a called shot to count, the referee must be satisfied that the intended shot was made, so if there is any chance of confusion, e.g. with bank, combination and similar shots, the shooter should indicate the ball and pocket. If the referee or opponent is unsure of the shot to be played, he may ask for a call.

In call shot games, the shooter may choose to call “safety” instead of a ball and pocket, and then play passes to the opponent at the end of the shot. Whether balls are being spotted after safeties depends on the rules of the particular game.

1.7 Balls Settling

A ball may settle slightly after it appears to have stopped, possibly due to slight imperfections in the ball or the table. Unless this causes a ball to fall into a pocket, it is considered a normal hazard of play, and the ball will not be moved back. If a ball falls into a pocket as the result of such settling, it is restored as closely as possible to its original position. If a settling ball falls into a pocket during or just prior to a shot, and this has an effect on the shot, the referee will restore the position and the shot will be replayed. The shooter is not penalized for shooting while a ball is settling. See also [8.3 Ball Pocketed](#).

1.8 Restoring a Position

When necessary for balls to be restored or cleaned, the referee will restore disturbed balls to their original positions to the best of his ability. The players must accept the referee's judgment as to placement.

1.9 Outside Interference

When outside interference occurs during a shot that has an effect on the outcome of that shot, the referee will restore the balls to the positions they had before the shot, and the shot will be replayed. If the interference had no effect on the shot, the referee will restore the disturbed balls and play will continue. If the balls cannot be restored to their original positions, the situation is handled like a stalemate.

1.10 Prompting Calls and Protesting Rulings

If a player feels that the referee has made an error in judgment, he may ask the referee to reconsider his call or lack of call, but the referee's decision on judgment calls is final. However, if the player feels that the referee is not applying the rules correctly, he may ask for ruling by the designated appeals authority. The referee will suspend play while this appeal is in process. (See also part (d) of [6.17 Unsportsmanlike Conduct](#).) Fouls must be called promptly. (See [6. Fouls](#).)

1.11 Concession

If a player concedes, he loses the match. For example, if a player unscrews his jointed playing cue stick while the opponent is at the table and during the opponent's decisive rack of a match, it will be considered a concession of the match.

1.12 Stalemate

If the referee observes that no progress is being made towards a conclusion, he will announce his decision, and each player will have three more turns at the table. Then, if the referee determines that there is still no progress, he will declare a stalemate. If both players agree, they may accept the stalemate without taking their three additional turns. The procedure for a stalemate is specified under the rules for each game.

2. 14.1 Continuous Pool

14.1 Continuous Pool, also known as straight pool, is played with fifteen numbered balls and the cue ball. Each ball pocketed on a legal called shot counts one point and the first player to reach the required score wins the match. 14.1 is continuous in that after fourteen balls are pocketed, they are re-racked and the shooter continues.

4.1 Lagging for the Break

Players lag to determine who will shoot first. (See [1.2 Lagging to Determine Order of Play](#))

4.2 The 14.1 Rack

For an opening break shot, the fifteen balls are racked in a triangle with the apex ball on the foot spot. When the balls are re-racked, the apex ball is committed if only fourteen balls are being racked. The marked outline of the triangle will be used to determine whether an intended break ball is in the rack area. When ball rack template is used at 14.1 the outline of a triangle will still be drawn for the purpose of deciding whether a ball is in the rack area..

4.3 Opening Break Shot

The following rules apply to the opening break shot:

- (a) The cue ball begins in hand behind the head string.
- (b) If no called ball is pocketed, the cue ball and two object balls must each be driven to a rail after the cue ball contacts the rack or the shot is a breaking foul. (See [8.4 Driven to a Rail](#).) This is penalized by subtracting two points from the breaker's score. (See [4.10 Breaking Foul](#).) The non-breaking player may accept the balls in position or may require the breaker to play another opening break shot, until he satisfies the requirements for an opening break or the non-shooting player accepts the table in position. (See [4.11 Serious Fouls](#))

4.4 Continuing Play and Winning the Game

The shooter remains at the table as long as he continues to legally pocket called balls or wins the game by scoring the required number of points. When fourteen balls from a rack have been legally pocketed, play is suspended until the balls are re-racked.

4.5 Shots Required to Be Called

Shots must be called as explained in [1.6 Standard Call Shot](#). The shooter may call "safety" in which case play passes to the opponent at the end of the shot and any object ball pocketed on the safety is spotted.

4.6 Spotting Balls

All balls pocketed on fouls, or on safeties, or without a called ball having been pocketed, and all balls driven off the table are spotted. (See [1.4 Spotting Balls](#).) If the fifteenth ball of a rack needs to be spotted and the fourteen balls have not been touched, the fifteenth ball will spot on the apex spot and the referee may use the triangle to assure a tight rack.

4.7 Scoring

The shooter scores one point for legally pocketing a called shot. Each additional ball pocketed on such a shot also counts one point. Fouls are penalized by subtracting points from the offending player's score. Scores may be negative due to penalties from fouls.

4.8 Special Racking Situations

When the cue ball or fifteenth object ball interferes with racking fourteen balls for a new rack, the following special rules apply. A ball is considered to interfere with the rack if it is within or overlaps the outline of the rack. The referee will state when asked whether a ball interferes with the rack.

(a) If the fifteenth ball was pocketed on the shot that scored the fourteenth ball, all fifteen balls are re-racked.

(b) If both balls interfere, all fifteen balls are re-racked and the cue ball is in hand behind the head string.

(c) If only the object ball interferes, it is placed on the head spot or the center spot if the cue ball blocks the head spot.

(d) If only the cue ball interferes, then it is placed as follows: if the object ball is in front of or on the head string, the cue ball is in hand behind the head string; if the object ball is behind the head string, the cue ball is spotted on the head spot, or on the center spot if the head spot is blocked.

In any case, there is no restriction on which object ball the shooter may play as the first shot of the new rack.

If the cue ball or object ball is barely outside the marked rack area and it is time to rack, the referee should mark the position of the ball to allow it to be accurately replaced if it is accidentally moved by the referee when racking.

Cue Ball Lies \ 15 th Ball Lies	In the rack	Not in the rack and not on the head spot*	On the head spot*
In the rack	15 th Ball: foot spot Cue Ball: behind head string	15 th Ball: head spot Cue Ball: in position	15 th Ball: center spot Cue Ball: in position
Pocketed	15 th Ball: foot spot Cue Ball: behind head string	15 th Ball: foot spot Cue Ball: in position	15 th Ball: foot spot Cue Ball: in position
Behind the head string but not on the head spot*	15 th Ball: in position Cue Ball: head spot		
Below the head string and not in the rack	15 th Ball: in position Cue Ball: behind head string		
On the head spot *	15 th Ball: in position Cue Ball: center spot	*On the head spot means to interfere with spotting a ball on the head spot.	

Table 1. Summary of the Rules for 14.1 Racking Situations

4.9 Standard Fouls

If the shooter commits a standard foul, a point is subtracted from his score, balls are spotted as necessary, and play passes to his opponent. The cue ball remains in position except as noted below. The following are standard fouls at 14.1:

[6.1 Cue Ball Scratch or off the Table](#) The cue ball is in hand behind the head string (see [1.5 Cue Ball in Hand](#)).

[6.3 No Rail after Contact](#)

[6.4 No Foot on Floor](#)

[6.5 Ball Driven off the Table](#) (All object balls driven off the table are respotted.)

[6.6 Touched Ball](#)

[6.7 Double Hit / Frozen Balls](#)

[6.8 Push Shot](#)

[6.9 Balls Still Moving](#)

[6.10 Bad Cue Ball Placement](#)

[6.11 Bad Play from Behind the Head String](#) For a foul under the second paragraph of 6.11, the cue ball is in hand behind the head string for the incoming player.

[6.12 Cue Stick on the Table](#)

[6.13 Playing out of Turn](#)

[6.15 Slow Play](#)

[6.16 Ball Rack Template Foul](#)

4.10 Breaking Foul

A breaking foul is penalized by the loss of two points as mentioned under [4.3 Opening Break Shot](#), as well as a possible re-break. If both a standard foul and a breaking foul happen on one shot, it is considered a breaking foul.

4.11 Serious Fouls

For Rule [6.14 Three Consecutive Fouls](#), only standard fouls are counted, so a breaking foul does not count as one of the three fouls. A point is subtracted for the third foul as usual, and then the additional fifteen-point penalty is subtracted and the offending player's consecutive foul count is reset to zero. All fifteen balls are re-racked and the offending player is required to shoot under the requirements of the opening break.

For [6.17 Unsportsmanlike Conduct](#), the referee will choose a penalty depending on the nature of the offense.

4.12 Stalemate

If a stalemate occurs (see [1.12 Stalemate](#)), the players will lag again to determine who will shoot an opening break.

3. Fouls

The following actions are fouls at pool when included in the specific rules of the game being played. If several fouls occur on one shot, only the most serious one is enforced. If a foul is not called before the next shot begins, the foul is assumed not to have happened.

3.1 Cue Ball Scratch or off the Table

If the cue ball is pocketed or driven off the table, the shot is a foul. See [8.3 Ball Pocketed](#) and [8.5 Driven off the Table](#).

3.2 Wrong Ball First

In those games which require the first object ball struck to be a particular ball or one of a group of balls, it is a foul for the cue ball to first contact any other ball.

3.3 No Rail after Contact

If no ball is pocketed on a shot, the cue ball must contact an object ball, and after that contact at least one ball (cue ball or any object ball) must be driven to a rail, or the shot is a foul. (See [8.4 Driven to a Rail](#).)

3.4 No Foot on Floor

If the shooter does not have at least one foot touching the floor at the instant the tip contacts the cue ball, the shot is a foul.

3.5 Ball Driven off the Table

It is a foul to drive an object ball off the table. Whether that ball is spotted depends on the rules of the game. (See [8.5 Driven off the Table](#).)

3.6 Touched Ball

It is a foul to touch, move or change the path of any object ball except by the normal ball-to-ball contacts during shots. It is a foul to touch, move or change the path of the cue ball except when it is in hand or by the normal tip-to-ball forward stroke contact of a shot. The shooter is responsible for the equipment he controls at the table, such as chalk, bridges, clothing, his hair, parts of his body, and the cue ball when it is in hand, that may be involved in such fouls. If such a foul is accidental, it is a standard foul, but if it is intentional, it is [6.17 Unsportsmanlike Conduct](#).

3.7 Double Hit / Frozen Balls

If the cue stick contacts the cue ball more than once on a shot, the shot is a foul. If the cue ball is close to but not touching an object ball and the cue tip is still on the cue ball when the cue

ball contacts that object ball, the shot is a foul. If the cue ball is very close to an object ball, and the shooter barely grazes that object ball on the shot, the shot is assumed not to violate the first paragraph of this rule, even though the tip is arguably still on the cue ball when ball-ball contact is made.

However, if the cue ball is touching an object ball at the start of the shot, it is legal to shoot towards or partly into that ball (provided it is a legal target within the rules of the game) and if the object ball is moved by such a shot, it is considered to have been contacted by the cue ball. (Even though it may be legal to shoot towards such a touching or “frozen” ball, care must be taken not to violate the rules in the first paragraph if there are additional balls close by.)

The cue ball is assumed not to be touching any ball unless it is declared touching by the referee or opponent. It is the shooter’s responsibility to get the declaration before the shot. Playing away from a frozen ball does not constitute having hit that ball unless specified in the rules of the game.

3.8 Push Shot

It is a foul to prolong tip-to-cue-ball contact beyond that seen in normal shots.

3.9 Balls Still Moving

It is a foul to begin a shot while any ball in play is moving or spinning.

3.10 Bad Cue Ball Placement

When the cue ball is in hand and restricted to the area behind the head string, it is a foul to play the cue ball from on or below the head string. If the shooter is uncertain whether the cue ball has been placed behind the head string, he may ask the referee for a determination.

3.11 Bad Play from Behind the Head String

When the cue ball is in hand behind the head string, and the first ball the cue ball contacts is also behind the head string, the shot is a foul unless the cue ball crosses the head string before that contact. If such a shot is intentional, it is unsportsmanlike conduct.

The cue ball must either cross the head string or contact a ball in front of or on the head string or the shot is a foul, and the cue ball is in hand for the following player according to the rules of the specific game. If such shot is intentional, it is also unsportsmanlike conduct.

3.12 Cue Stick on the Table

If the shooter uses his cue stick in order to align a shot by placing it on the table without having a hand on the stick, it is a foul.

3.13 Playing out of Turn

It is a standard foul to unintentionally play out of turn. Normally, the balls will be played from the position left by the mistaken play. If a player intentionally plays out of turn, it should be treated like [6.17 Unsportsmanlike Conduct](#).

3.14 Three Consecutive Fouls

If a player fouls three times without making an intervening legal shot, it is a serious foul. In games scored by the rack, such as nine ball, the fouls must be in a single rack. Some games such as eight ball do not include this rule.

The referee must warn a shooter who is on two fouls when he comes to the table that he is on two fouls. Otherwise a possible third foul will be considered to be only the second.

3.15 Slow Play

If the referee feels that a player is playing too slowly, he may advise that player to speed up his play. If the player does not speed up, the referee may impose a shot clock on that match that applies to both players. If the shooter exceeds the time limit specified for the tournament, a standard foul will be called and the incoming player is rewarded according to the rules applicable to the game being played. (Rule [6.17 Unsportsmanlike Conduct](#) may also apply.)

3.16 Ball Rack Template Foul

It is a foul when a Ball Rack Template, removed from the playing surface, interferes with the game i.e. if the template is lying on the rail and a ball (cue or object ball) touches the template that is lying on the rail.

3.17 Unsportsmanlike Conduct

The normal penalty for unsportsmanlike conduct is the same as for a serious foul, but the referee may impose a penalty depending on his judgment of the conduct. Among other penalties possible are a warning; a standard-foul penalty, which will count as part of a three-foul sequence if applicable; a serious-foul penalty; loss of a rack, set or match; ejection from the competition possibly with forfeiture of all prizes, trophies and standings points.

Unsportsmanlike conduct is any intentional behavior that brings disrepute to the sport or which disrupts or changes the game to the extent that it cannot be played fairly. It includes

- (a)) distracting the opponent;
- (b) changing the position of the balls in play other than by a shot;
- (c)) playing a shot by intentionally miscuing;
- (d) continuing to play after a foul has been called or play has been suspended;
- (e)) practicing during a match;
- (f)) marking the table;
- (g) delay of the game; and
- (h) using equipment inappropriately.