

Official Rules 8-Ball

St. Albans Pool League
2025-2026

OBJECT OF THE GAME

Eight-Ball is a call shot game played with a cue ball and 15 object balls, numbered 1 through 15. One player must pocket balls of the group numbered 1 through 7 (solid colors), while the other has 9 through 15 (stripes). The player pocketing either group first, and then legally pocketing the 8-ball wins the game. The first team to win 9 games wins the match.

CALL POCKET

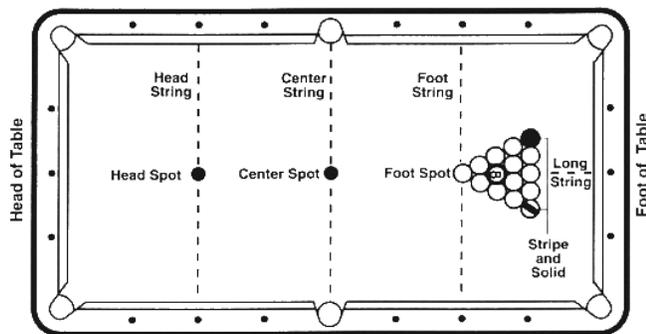
In Call Pocket, obvious balls and pockets do not have to be indicated. It is the opponent's right to ask which ball and pocket if he/she is unsure of the shot. Bank shots and combination shots are not considered obvious, and care should be taken when calling both the object ball and the intended pocket. When calling the shot, it is never necessary to indicate details such as the number of cushions, banks, kisses, caroms, etc. Any balls pocketed on a foul remain pocketed, regardless of whether they belong to the shooter or the opponent. The opening break is not a "called shot". Any player performing a break shot in 8-Ball may continue to shoot so long as any object ball is legally pocketed on the break. All balls are call-pocket including the 8-Ball. This means when shooting the 8-Ball it must be struck first but does not have to go clean as long as it goes into the intended pocket.

RACKING THE BALLS

The balls are racked in a triangle at the foot of the table with the 8-Ball in the center of the triangle, the first ball of the rack on the foot spot, a stripe ball in one corner of the rack, and a solid ball in the other corner.

ORDER OF BREAK & SHOOTING

Break according to the score sheet. (A) - away and (H) - home. Each team of 4 is made up of 2 partner teams. The team that wins the first game plays a second, while the other team sits. Play then continues with each partner team alternating every 2 games until one team reaches 9 wins.



LEGAL BREAK SHOT

(Defined) To execute a legal break, the breaker (with the cue ball behind the head string) must either (1) pocket a ball, or (2) drive at least four numbered balls to the rail. When the breaker fails to make a legal break, it is a foul, and the incoming player has the option of (1) accepting the table in position and shooting, or (2) having the balls re-racked and having the option of shooting the opening break or allowing the offending player to re-break.

SCRATCH ON A LEGAL BREAK

If a player scratches on a legal break shot, (1) all balls pocketed remain pocketed with the exception of the 8-Ball, (2) it is a foul, and (3) the table is open. Please Note: The incoming player has cue ball in hand behind the head string. This is the only time a foul is not ball in hand anywhere. If the 8 ball is pocketed and a scratch occurs this is a loss of game, with the exception of a match-winning game, in which case the 8-Ball will be spotted and the incoming player will have cue ball in hand behind the head string. (A match can not be won or lost with an 8-ball break or break and scratch. (see 9th Game Rule).

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OBJECT BALLS JUMPED OFF THE TABLE ON THE BREAK

If a player jumps an object ball off the table on the break shot, it is a foul and the incoming player can either play the cue ball as it lays or take ball in hand behind the head string. All balls that jumped off the table remain off the table. If the 8-ball is one of these balls it is a loss of the game with the exception of the match-winning game in which it will be spotted for the incoming team (see 9th Game Rule).

8-BALL POCKETED ON THE BREAK

If the 8-ball is pocketed on the break it is a win with the exception of a match-winning game (see 9th Game Rule).

If the breaker scratches while pocketing the 8-ball on the break it is a loss with the exception of a match-winning game. (see 9th Game Rule).

9TH GAME RULE

If a team has a score of 8 the match can not be won or lost by breaking the 8-ball or breaking the 8-Ball and fouling. In this case, the 8-ball is spotted and the incoming player continues shooting. If a scratch occurs the incoming player will take cue ball in hand behind the head string. If the team with the lower score will benefit, this rule does not apply and they win a game.

OPEN TABLE

(Defined) The table is "open" when the choice of groups (stripes or solids) has not yet been determined. When the table is open, it is legal to hit a solid first to make a stripe or vice-versa. Note: The table is always open immediately after the break shot. When the table is open, it is legal to hit any solid or stripe first in the process of pocketing the called stripe or solid. However, when the table is open and the 8-ball is the first ball contacted, it is a foul and no stripe or solid may be scored in favor of the shooter. The shooter loses his turn; the incoming player is awarded cue ball in hand; any balls pocketed remain pocketed; and the incoming player addresses the balls with the table still open. On an open table, all illegally pocketed balls remain pocketed. While the 8-Ball can't be hit first, it can be used in the middle of a combination.

CHOICE OF GROUP

The choice of stripes or solids is not determined on the break even if balls are made from only one or both groups, because the table is always open immediately after the break shot. The choice of group is determined only when a player legally pockets a called object ball after the break shot.

If the groups have been determined and the player mistakenly shoots at and pockets a ball of the wrong group, the opponent must call a foul on him before he takes his next shot. If the opponent fails to call a foul and the player pockets a second ball, the player takes over that group of balls, at which time the other team takes the opposite balls. Anyone of the 4 players from either team can point out this foul.

LEGAL SHOT

(Defined) On all shots (except on the break and when the table is open), the shooter must hit one of their group of balls first and (1) pocket a numbered ball, or (2) cause the cue ball or any numbered ball to contact a rail. Please Note: It is permissible for the shooter to bank the cue ball off a rail before contacting the object ball; however, after contact with the object ball, an object ball must be pocketed, or the cue ball or any numbered ball must contact a rail. Failure to meet these requirements is a foul.

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“SAFETY” SHOT

For tactical reasons, a player may choose to pocket an obvious object ball and also discontinue a turn at the table by declaring “safety” in advance. A safety shot is defined as a legal shot. If the shooting player intends to play safe by pocketing an obvious object ball, then prior to the shot, the shooter must declare a “safety” to the opponent. It is the shooter’s responsibility to make the opponent aware of the intended safety shot. If this is not done, and one of the shooter’s object balls is pocketed, the shooter will be required to shoot again. Any ball pocketed on a safety shot remains pocketed.

CUE BALL FOULS - (CUE BALL-IN-MOTION FOUL)

With Cue Ball-In-Motion fouls, a player setting up for a shot that bumps/moves an object ball with any part of themselves or their equipment may stand up and let the opponent know that they did so. It is then on the opponent to leave such a ball as it lays or place it back where they thought it was. If more than one ball is moved or disrupted it is a foul and results in ball in hand. Once contact has been made with the cue ball and it is set into motion it becomes all ball fouls. If the cue ball is bumped or touched at any point in time without a legal shot resulting, it is a foul. (Basically, don’t touch the cue ball until you are ready to shoot, and once you put it in motion don’t touch anything else). “Also, please keep in mind, this game is fun and friendly so accidental clothing and belly touches should be ignored unless they cause significant movement.”

FOUL PENALTY

The opposing player gets cue ball in hand. This means the player can place the cue ball anywhere on the table (it does not have to be behind the head-string). This rule prevents a player from making intentional fouls which would put an opponent at a disadvantage. With "cue ball in hand", the player may use a hand or any part of a cue (including the tip) to position the cue ball. When placing the cue ball in position, any forward stroke motion contacting the cue ball will be a foul, if not a legal shot.

A Foul Penalty occurs when a player:

- Scratches in the pocket.
- Fails to make contact with their group first.
- Does not successfully complete a legal shot or safety. (see Legal Shot and Safety Shot)
- Moves more than one ball accidentally before contacting the cue ball. (see Cue Ball Fouls)
- Moves any balls once the cue ball has been put into motion. (see Cue Ball Fouls)
- A player double-hits the cue ball with their tip. (Usually occurs when cue ball and object ball are within an inch of one another and cue is not angled away from the shot.)
 - If you think a foul may occur on a shot please have someone from each team watch the hit! If not, the shooter's call will stand.
- A player should never put their hand in a pocket to catch a cue ball or object ball including the 8-ball. While it may not change the outcome it can cause controversy. If a player does this, whether it changes the outcome or not, it will rule in favor of the incoming team.
 - **Example 1:** The cue ball is about to scratch and out of discouragement you reach in the pocket while it’s still rolling and as it gets there you realize it’s not falling so you move your hand and it rattles and stays on the table. This will be ball in hand.
 - **Example 2:** The 8-ball is about to go in early or in the wrong pocket and out of discouragement you reach in the pocket while it’s still rolling and as it gets there you realize it’s not falling so you move your hand and it rattles and stays on the table. The 8-ball would be considered pocketed and loss of game would occur.
 - **In short. Don’t reach for balls that are still in motion!**

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SCORING

At the end of each match all games won should be totaled and placed in the correct spot on the score sheet. These scores determine the points awarded for the week. Points awarded are as follows:

- 3 Points for the winning team with 9 games won.
- 2 Points for a team that doesn't win but reaches at least 5 games won.
- 1 Point for a team that doesn't win and has 4 or less games won.

Points will be totaled each week and the team with the highest amount of points wins the season. Each team will play all other teams twice. After each round of play there may be a position round where the teams will play whichever team is closest to them in points, starting at the number 1 spot. All ties for position rounds and the end of the season will be determined by total games won. If points and games won are the same it will then default to which team won more games against the other. If there is still a tie there will be a playoff.

COMBINATION SHOTS

Combination shots are allowed; however, while the 8-Ball can be used as a neutral ball, it can't be used as a first ball in the combination unless it is the shooter's only remaining legal object ball on the table. Otherwise, should such contact occur on the 8-Ball, it is a foul.

ILLEGALLY POKETED BALLS

An object ball is considered to be illegally pocketed when (1) that object ball is pocketed on the same shot a foul is committed, (2) the called ball did not go in the designated pocket, or (3) a safety is called prior to the shot. Illegally pocketed balls remain pocketed and are scored in favor of the shooter controlling that specific group of balls, solids, or stripes.

OBJECT BALLS JUMPED OFF THE TABLE

After the opening break, if any object ball is jumped off the table, it is a foul and loss of turn, unless it is the 8-ball, which is a loss of game with the exception of the 9th game rule. Any jumped object balls remain down and are not spotted. The incoming player gets ball in hand.

PLAYING THE 8-BALL

When the 8-Ball is the legal object ball, a scratch or foul is not a loss of game unless the 8-Ball is pocketed or jumped from the table. The incoming player has cue ball in hand and play continues. The 8-Ball must be contacted first but can be played off other balls as long as it reaches the called pocket. It is call pocket only.

LOSS OF GAME

A player loses the game by committing any of the following infractions:

1. Fouls when pocketing the 8-Ball (exception: see 8-Ball Pocketed On The Break).
2. Jumps the 8-Ball off the table at any time (exception: 9th Game Rule).
3. Pockets the 8-Ball in a pocket other than the one designated.
4. Pockets the 8-Ball when it is not the legal object ball.

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RULE INFRACTIONS

All infractions must be called before another shot is taken, or else it will be deemed that no infraction occurred. Once a game or match is completed the time to dispute anything is over.

TALKING AND INTERACTING

- First and foremost, while it does get competitive, this league is supposed to be fun.
- Heckling and joking around at a minimum can be fun but not when it gets excessive or directly affects a player's shooting. For example, don't yell out "What pocket?" on an obvious shot when the person is about to hit the cue ball.
- There are **two people per team allowed to interact at the table**. When discussing shots please keep the flow going quickly, no more than 30 seconds to 1 minute per shot. Some shots are hard and need a discussion but not every shot please!
- **Who can be involved and when** (All of these are times where anyone from either team may speak up. We are all drinking and socializing, and should be able to trust that we don't have to keep a constant eye on everyone!)
 - When shooting, only the two people shooting can talk about the shots to each other. Team members not in the game may talk amongst themselves away from the table, but should not have direct conversations with the two players who are shooting.
 - The only exceptions to this rule are as follows:
 - When a player doesn't know they have ball in hand
 - When a player has or is about to shoot the wrong group of balls
 - When a player is about to shoot the 8 ball when they have balls left
 - If there is a foul committed by either team and it wasn't seen
- If you are not part of the team of two at the table please keep a respectable distance from the table unless someone asks you to watch a shot for them.
- **Down a player before or during a match**
 - First and foremost, there will be no forfeits if possible. The bars and clubs sponsor this league and depend on us being there to play. (Preferably on the night scheduled)
 - If too many players are out due to illness, a night may be rescheduled as a last resort.
 - If you are a player short or someone has to leave due to an emergency, grab a random person to fill in. (There is usually someone willing at each location, just fix paperwork accordingly)
 - If there is a situation where there isn't anyone to fill in, you will play with three. It goes as follows: **(Updated for second half of season. The other way wasn't working well)**.
 - Two players will start
 - If they win, the same two will play one more game, after which one will sit and the third player will come in (this is the only time a player will play 3 in a row).
 - If they lose, one player will sit and one will stay and the third player will come in.
 - After this, the team will continue to alternate players with one player always playing two in a row and then sitting for one game.
 - The same rotation will continue until the night is done.
 - This will only be allowed in certain circumstances and must be approved by the opposing team and/or league operator as one of those situations.

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SUBS & POSITION ROUNDS

Anyone can sub for any team if needed. Subbing for more than one team is also okay. Anyone subbing for position rounds must have subbed for the team they are playing for prior to that night.

MATCHES

- Matches will be first to win 9 games.
- Please log both team's total games won on the score sheet. Totals are needed for scoring purposes.
- On the score sheet, there is a spot to mark if a player breaks an 8-ball for the win.
 - If an 8-ball is made in the 9th game and play continues this can still be marked on the score sheet under 8-balls made on break. It won't be a win but it will count toward the total for the end of the year. (Players will receive 1 ticket per 8-ball break for the end-of-the-season drawing.)
- On the score sheet, there is a spot to mark if a player breaks and runs for the win.
 - The same player must break the balls and pocket the 8-ball for a win without missing a shot. (Players will receive 1 ticket per break and run for the end-of-the-season drawing.)

THINGS TO REMEMBER

1. 8-Ball break on the match-winning game is not a win, it is spotted and play continues!
2. 8-Ball break and scratch on the match-winning game is not a loss, it is spotted and the incoming player gets cue ball in hand behind the head string!!
3. Scratching while shooting the 8-Ball is only a loss of game if the 8-Ball leaves the table, otherwise, it is ball in hand for the incoming player!
4. Call ball and pocket on all balls including the 8-Ball. They do not have to go clean as long as they reach the intended pocket!
5. Don't reach into pockets to grab balls that are still in motion!
6. **You represent the bar/club that paid your entry - Please have good sportsmanship!**

TEAMS & TROPHY

Teams will be made up of 4 players per night (two partner sets). When a team is in need of a sub they can have anyone sub for their team. Anyone playing on a team for at least 6 of the total weeks will be eligible to be considered part of the team on the trophy as long as the team total doesn't exceed 6 players.

END OF SEASON

There will be an End of Season Banquet held the week following the league's end. The following will occur at this banquet:

- Food & Drinks
- End of the season tournament. (Singles or blind draw doubles depending on entrants and time.)
- Drawings & Prizes (Most 8-ball breaks, most runs, & 50/50)

For further info and updates the website is updated weekly. There are also printable score sheets, rules, and standings on the site.

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