



9-Ball Rules

1. 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. You retain your turn at the table as long as you strike the lowest numbered ball first and legally pocket any ball. You need not pocket the lowest numbered ball to continue shooting. You may, for example, shoot the 1-ball into the 4-ball thus pocketing the 4. You would then continue shooting and must, once again, strike the 1-ball first. If you hit the lowest numbered ball first and pocket the 9-ball without committing a foul, you win the game.

2. Breaking: Prior to each game, the referee will conduct a coin-toss. The winner of the coin-toss will have the option of breaking or requiring his/her opponent to break. To be a legal break, the player must break from behind the head string, the 1-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. If the break does not qualify as legal, or any of the other fouls listed in section 4 occur, it is a foul and the opponent has *ball-in-hand*. In placing the cue ball for the break, a player may, if not satisfied with the placement, make further adjustments with the hand, cue stick or any other reasonable piece of equipment. No foul may be assessed prior to the break shot.

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

- a. The 9-ball is pocketed without a foul: the breaker wins the game.
- b. One or more object balls other than the 9-ball are pocketed without a foul: it is still the breaker's turn and he/she shoots at the lowest numbered ball on the table.
- c. No object balls are pocketed and no foul is committed: it is the opposing player's turn.
- d. A foul on the break and the 9-ball is pocketed: the breaker loses the game.
- e. A foul on the break and the 9-ball is not pocketed: *ball-in-hand* (section 4) anywhere on the table for the breaker's opponent. Any other pocketed balls stay down.

4. Fouls: If any of the following fouls are committed, the penalty is *ball-in-hand* for the opposing player (except see section 5). Any balls pocketed during the foul stay down. Make certain you have *ball-in-hand* before you touch the cue ball by confirming with the referee or 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.

4.1 Any of the Following Fouls result in BALL-IN-HAND:

- a. The break is illegal (see section 2).
- b. The cue ball goes into a pocket, on the floor, or otherwise ends up off of the playing surface.
- c. Failure to hit the lowest numbered ball first, or failure to hit any ball.
- d. After the cue ball strikes the lowest numbered ball, neither of the following occur:
 - An object ball or the cue ball strikes a rail.
 - An object ball goes into a pocket.

- e. The player, the player's clothing, or anything under the player's control touches or moves an object ball or the cue ball, other than:
 - The actual playing of the next shot.
 - Placing the cue ball under the *ball-in-hand* rule.
- f. Striking the shot without having at least one foot on the floor.
- g. Jumping the cue ball by striking it below center (scooping). Jumping the cue ball over another ball by hitting it above center is legal. Accidental miscuing is not a foul unless other rules in this section are violated.

5. 9-Ball Foul: If any of the fouls described in section 4 results in the 9-ball being pocketed, the offending player loses the game.

6. Object Ball Off Table: Object balls that are knocked off the playing surface during a player's shot 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 off the table they are placed in numerical order with the lowest numbered ball closest to the foot spot. Spotted balls will be frozen to one another. Knocking an object ball off the table is not a foul. It might occur that a player legally pockets a ball while simultaneously knocking some other ball(s) off the table. In this situation, the ball(s) is(are) spotted and the player continues shooting.

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

8. Calling Your Shot: You do not need to call your shot in any way. "Slop" counts.

9. Push-Outs: Push-outs are fairly standard in pro events and in the U.S. Amateur (conducted by the APA/CPA); however, these rules do not allow push-outs.

10. 8-Ball Handicap: At the discretion of the tournament organizer, the *8-ball Handicap* may be in effect for any game. The *8-ball Handicap* is normally invoked when a past tournament winner is playing against a non-past tournament winner. In a game where the *8-Ball Handicap* is in effect, these additional rules apply:

- a. If the handicapped player pockets the 8-ball without a foul, he/she wins the game.
- b. If the handicapped player pockets the 8-ball while committing a foul, the game continues and the opponent has ball-in-hand as specified in section 4.

11. Advice: No one other than the shooter's opponent may give material advice to the shooter. If another contestant gives material advice, they may, at the discretion of the referee, be disqualified. In addition, any contestant receiving material advice from anyone other than their opponent may, at the discretion of the referee, be disqualified. At any time a contestant may ask the referee a question about these rules.

12. Good Sportsmanship: Every contestant is expected to show proper consideration for fairness, ethics, respect, and a sense of fellowship with one's competitors. A display of poor sportsmanship may, at the discretion of the referee, subject the offender to one of the following:

- A warning.
- Forfeit of the current game.
- Disqualification from the tournament.
- Barred from future tournaments.

Note: Intentionally committing any of the fouls described in sections 4.1.a through 4.1.d is an acceptable tactic, and is not considered poor sportsmanship.