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# INDEPENDENT BILLIARDS LEAGUE OF CT

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Official IBL Rulebook for Thursday Night 8-ball

AUGUST 25, 2021  
*INDEPENDENT BILLIARDS LEAGUE OF CT*  
Southern Connecticut  
Revision 4

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## 1.0 OBJECT OF THE GAME

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 THE BREAK

*In the IBL, the game cannot be won or lost on the break.*

To begin the game of 8-ball, the 15 colored balls are placed randomly in a triangle, called a “rack”. 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. The balls in the rack are pressed together tightly to acquire a solid rack and remain in contact after the rack is removed. ***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).*** The game begins with the cue ball in hand placed anywhere behind the head string. The head string is the quarter of the pool table farthest from the rack, or an area also commonly referred to as the “kitchen.”

### 2.1 Rack your own

A player is permitted to rack their own balls as opposed to their opponent racking for them.

## 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 specific 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:** If the cue ball is touched by the cue tip and does not meet the legal break requirement, it is considered an “illegal break.”

Game play after a Legal Break:

When any numbered ball is pocketed on a legal break the breaking player is to continue their inning (see 6.0, Open Table). If the breaker makes a legal break, however, commits a foul on the legal break by pocketing the cue-ball and/or sending any balls off the table, the game is to continue with the opponent having ball in hand anywhere on the table.

## 4.0 8-BALL POCKETED ON THE BREAK

The game cannot be won or lost on the break. However, if a player pockets the 8-ball on the break without a foul, 3 points shall be awarded to his/her team. The 3 points shall be added to the end of the current round. The breaker may spot the 8-ball and continue play from the location of the cue ball or request a re-rack and break again. If a player pockets the 8-ball on the break and scratches the 8-ball will be spotted and their opponent will have ball in hand from anywhere on the table.

**NOTE:** A player may only be awarded 3 points for an 8 on the break once per round.

## 5.0 LAGGING FOR THE BREAK (5<sup>th</sup> round only)

The following procedure is used for the lag. Using two object balls behind the head string, one player to the left and one to the right of the head spot, the balls are shot simultaneously to the foot cushion and back to the head end of the table. The player whose ball is the closest to the innermost edge of the head cushion wins the lag. The lagged ball must contact the foot cushion. Other cushion contacts are immaterial, except as prohibited below. It is an automatic loss of the lag if:

- (a) The ball crosses into the opponent's half of the table.
- (b) The ball fails to contact the foot cushion.
- (c) The ball drops into a pocket.
- (d) The ball jumps off the table.
- (e) The ball touches the long cushion.
- (f) The ball rests within the corner pocket and past the nose of the head cushion, or
- (g) The ball contacts the foot rail more than once. If both players violate automatic-loss lag rules, or if the referee is unable to determine which ball is closer, the lag is a tie and is replayed.

## 6.0 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 group (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 if it is not struck first; this action would result in a foul.

## 7.0 CALL POCKET

In Call Pocket, it is encouraged that all balls be specified 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 their designated object ball, they continue their inning until either a miss or a foul 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, as a result of a called shot 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).

## 8.0 BALL IN HAND FOUL PENALTIES

When a player commits a ball in hand foul, they must relinquish their turn at the table. 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. A player must make sure they have ball in hand before touching the cue ball.

### 8.1 Cue Ball Fouls Only

- a) Touching the cue ball: Touching or causing even the slightest movement of the cue ball (other than a normal shot), even accidentally, is a foul. However, a player may use the ferrule or shaft of his/her cue to line up the cue ball when a “ball in hand” is in play. Using the tip is a foul, and a 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 results in the disturbed ball being struck by any moving balls in play, it is a foul.
- c) Touching a still object ball: Accidentally moving a still object ball is not a foul. However, disturbing more than one (1) object ball is a foul. Also, if an object ball is accidentally moved and another object ball or cue ball ends up rolling through the path of where the disturbed ball once rested it is a foul. 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 a disturbed ball in the 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 back to the original position. If the player who has committed the infraction touches any disturbed ball without consent of opponent, it is a foul.
- d) Touching a still object ball with the bridge: Accidentally touching a still object ball with the bridge is not a foul. The same rules apply from 8.1 c) located directly above in this section.
- e) Cue Ball in Hand Foul: During cue ball in hand placement, the player may use his hand or any part of his cue (*except for the cue tip*) to position the cue ball. When placing the cue ball if the player accidentally touches any object ball with the cue ball or any part of their body it is a foul. **Only the player may touch the cue ball when they have “Ball in Hand”.**

### 8.2 Scratch

Pocketing the cue ball or driving it off the table is a ball in hand foul. If a scratch occurs while shooting the 8-ball, but the 8-ball was not pocketed or removed from the table, the game continues with ball in hand to the opponent (scratching on the 8-ball is not a loss of game if the 8-ball is still in play).

### 8.3 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.

## 8.4 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.

## 8.5 Object Balls Frozen to the Cushion or Cue Ball

This rule applies to any shot where the cue ball’s first contact with a ball is with one that is frozen to a cushion or to the cue ball itself. After the cue ball contacts the frozen object ball, the shot must result in either:

- (a) A ball being pocketed, or;
- (b) The cue ball contacting a cushion, or;
- (c) The frozen ball being caused to contact a cushion attached to a separate rail, or;
- (d) Another object ball being caused to contact a cushion with which it was not already in contact. Failure to satisfy one of those four requirements is a foul. A ball which is touching a cushion at the start of a shot and then is forced into a cushion attached to the same rail is not considered to have been driven to that cushion unless it leaves the cushion, contacts another ball, and then contacts the cushion again.

**Note:** The shooter’s opponent prior to the shot must inform them by calling the object ball “Frozen” loud enough for the shooter to hear and acknowledge the situation.

## 8.6 Balls off the Table

Causing any ball to come to rest off of the pool table 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 person or object was contacted, then normal rules of play apply once the ball returns to the playing surface.

## 8.7 Foot on the Floor

Failure to have at least one foot on the floor at the moment the cue tip strikes the cue ball is a ball in hand foul.

## 8.8 Jump Shot

A legal jump shot must be executed by stroking down through the cue ball (no scooping under the cue ball or it is a foul).

## 8.9 Moving Ball

Shooting while any ball is moving or spinning is a ball in hand foul.

## **8.10 Double Hit (Chalk Rule)**

If the cue tip strikes the cue ball twice on the same stroke, it is a ball in hand foul. To avoid a double hit, the cue ball must be struck at a minimum of a 45° angle whenever riskily close (a chalk width or closer) to the intended object ball. If the player decides to shoot the cue ball straight ahead at the object ball the player must elevate the back of their cue stick at least to a 45° angle and shoot downward at the cue ball. In doing so, they must keep the cue ball from moving straight ahead and past the spot of where the object ball was resting prior to the shot. Failure to do so is considered a double hit which is a ball in hand foul.

**Note:** The shooter's opponent prior to the shot must inform them by calling "Chalk Rule" loud enough for the shooter to hear and acknowledge. If the cue ball and object ball are frozen the Chalk Rule does not apply.

## **8.11 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.

## **8.12 Ball in Hand Placement**

Touching an object ball, in any way, while placing the cue ball is a ball in hand foul.

## **8.13 Interference**

While the shooting player is at the table, their opponent, as well as their teammates, cannot disturb, make noises, move around, cause distraction (sharking) in any way. All players must conduct themselves in a respectful manner or a manner consistent with that of a professional, or it may result in an "Official Warning" by a team captain followed by the calling of a foul (ball in hand) for interference.

## **8.14 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 prior to shooting.

## **8.15 Playing out of Turn (what to do)**

If/when a player shoots out of turn and it is brought to the attention of the offending shooter, the game is to be halted without penalty or foul. Identify the correct player(s) and start a new game.

If "Playing Out of Turn" is not discovered until the game is over the team captains should look to see if a match with the same two players will occur in a later round? If so, record the result of the match in the later round as if it happened that way. Otherwise, the game does not count, and the correct players are to play their match as scheduled.

## **9.0 SAFETY PLAY**

For strategic reasons, 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. Otherwise, he/she would be forced to continue



playing. Any ball pocked during safety play remains pocketed.

## 10.0 LOSS OF GAME

### 10.1 Opponent Wins

The opponent legally pockets the 8-ball.

### 10.2 8-Ball Foul

An 8-ball foul occurs when the 8-ball comes to rest off of the pool table, when the 8-ball is pocketed in the wrong pocket or out of sequence, or when the 8-ball is pocketed while a foul occurred (i.e., shooting player pockets the 8-ball and simultaneously scratches). The game continues if the 8-ball has not been pocketed.

### 10.3 Conceding a Game

Concession of a game is never encouraged. The shooting player must finish his/her inning, or the result shall be a loss of game for the conceding player. Also, unscrewing your cue, putting on your jacket, or saying “nice game” or something to that effect prior to the game being over is a loss of game for the offending player. Any concession of game, for any reason, is considered a loss for the offending player. The winning player will be awarded 10 points and the offending player will be credited for the balls they pocketed. (This rule may seem petty, but it is consistent with sharking. It is not okay to distract a player by breaking their concentration).

### 10.4 Coaching Assistance

2 time-outs are allowed per round, and may be taken by 1 player only, or by 2 different players. A time out shall last no more than a two-minute period. The shooter, or any other team member, may call for, or ask for a time-out. If the shooter is down on the shot, they SHALL BE ACCREDITED WITH A TIME-OUT and DOES NOT have the option to decline. If the shooter is standing or walking around the table when a time-out is called the shooter DOES NOT have to take the time-out and CAN decline.

**When all 2 time-outs for a round have already been taken.** If the player asks for a time-out, they shall be informed that no more time-outs are available. If a team member calls for, or asks the player if they want a time-out, either of these actions shall be considered a foul resulting in ball-in-hand to the opponent.

When a time-out is called, only one coach of the player’s choice must proceed to the player immediately. The coach MAY NOT confer with anyone else for advice after the time-out is called – NO TEAM CONFERENCES!

Only one coach allowed per time-out. If another person offers coaching advice to the player during a time-out, a second time-out will be accredited to that player.

**If the coach leaves the player and then later returns to the player before the player shoots.**

- 1) This shall be considered as the same time-out, as long as the coach does not talk to anyone,
- 2) If the coach talks to anyone, this action shall be considered a second time-out.

During a coaching time-out, when player has ball-in-hand, the coach MAY NOT touch the cue ball when directing the player for cue ball placement. The player SHALL be the only one who can touch and place the cue-ball.

## **11.0 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 an immediate loss of the game, then the game is considered a stalemate. At this time, the game would be re-racked, and the breaker would remain the same.

## **12.0 GENERAL POOL RULES**

### **12.1 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 (see 8.3, Bad Hit). Any of the wrong balls pocketed will stay down.

### **12.2 Shot Clock**

Shot Clock implementation is at the sole discretion of both team captains. If play is moving slow a team captain should notify the opposing team captain as a first warning. If slow play continues and the team captain gives a second notification to the opposing team's captain, the shot clock rule will go into effect. When a shot clock is utilized, it shall be used for both players competing and in the following manner:

Each shooting player is allotted one (1) minute for each shot, or a "ball in hand" foul shall be granted to the opponent. The shot clock is to be started once all balls come to rest. The timekeeper (designated by both team captains) 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 down on the shot or have taken the shot. If the shooter rises back up without execution of the shot after the one (1) minute mark has been reached it shall result in a "ball in hand" foul to the opponent.

Each player can call for one 30 second extension per game. The extension will only be granted if asked for prior to the one (1) minute shot clock expiring. The same rules apply to the 30 second extension where a 10 second warning is announced by the Timekeeper.

### **12.3 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.

### **12.4 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 that are full or nearly full of balls is the responsibility of the shooting player. (If playing on a table with drop pockets)

### **12.5 Hanging Ball**

If an object ball hangs in a pocket and drops in 3 seconds or less after appearing to come to

complete rest by the hole the ball is considered to be pocketed. If a hanging ball drops in the pocket after being at rest for more than 3 seconds the ball is returned to the original position on the edge, and the incoming player may begin their inning.

## 12.6 Suspended Balls (Tables with Drop Pockets)

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.

## 12.7 Jawed Balls

If two or more balls are locked between the jaws or sides of the pocket, with one or more suspended in air, the referee shall inspect the balls in position and follow this procedure: they shall visually (or physically if they desires) project each ball directly downward from its locked position; any ball that in the referee's judgment would fall in the pocket if so moved directly downward is a pocketed ball, while any ball that would come to rest on the bed of the table is not pocketed. The balls are then placed according to the referee's assessment, and play continues according to specific game rules as if no locking or jawing of balls had occurred.

**Note:** We do not use an official referee, so a league operator or committee member should be utilized first. If not available, a third-party IBL league member who is familiar with the rules should be utilized. Both players shall agree upon the third-party IBL league member. The third party's decision is final.

## 12.8 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 because 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.

## 12.9 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, force 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 IBL.

## **12.10 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. A legal cue ball shall be used whenever possible. Some bar tables may have an oversized or weighted cue ball and shall not be used for match play unless a legal cue ball is unavailable. Once the match is over the original cue ball shall be returned to the table.

**NOTE:** The use of headphones, cell phones and other electronic devices are not permitted while the player is playing their match.

## **12.11 Player Responsibilities**

It is the responsibility of each member to be aware of all rules, regulations, and schedules relating to their 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(s) clarification during league play. This is not considered a "Time Out."

## **12.12 Questionable Shots (Watching a Hit)**

Players will be responsible for racking balls, watching/calling fouls (including on themselves), and insuring adherence to IBL rules of competition. Committee members or league operators should be asked to watch potentially questionable hits. If not available, both players may agree on a 3<sup>rd</sup> party member (familiar with IBL rules) to stand in and watch a hit in place of a league official. If anyone is called upon to watch a hit, that person's call will be final. If no one is called to watch a hit and there is a disagreement the call goes to the shooter.

## **12.13 Advise vs. Rules Clarification**

An IBL member must NEVER give advice nor offer an opinion on points of play. Only when asked by either player for clarification of a rule will the IBL member then explain that specific rule to the best of his/her ability. Any incorrect statement made by the IBL member will not protect a player from enforcement of the actual rule. When asked, the IBL member must tell either player whether the cue ball is frozen to an object ball or rail, etc. If the IBL member sees that a foul is about to be committed by either player, they must say nothing until after the foul, since any warning before the foul would constitute "advice" from the IBL member.

## **12.14 Calling Fouls**

Any teammate can call all fouls as soon as they occur and inform their player that they have ball in hand without using a timeout. However, the incoming player must verify the shooter is aware of the foul prior to taking ball in hand.

## **12.15 Conflict Resolution**

To keep disputes from dragging on, all disputes will go to the shooter unless a third party was called upon to watch the hit. The third party watching the hit must be agreed upon by both players. The third party's call on the hit is final. If for some reason a dispute cannot be resolved in this matter the game may be played under protest. (See 13.0, Special Rulings)

## 13.0 SPECIAL RULINGS

Any rule or situation not covered in this text shall be decided in an expedient manner by the League Operator, his appointed representative, or any committee member of the IBL in accordance with IBL ideals and guidelines for the purposes of league play to continue.

### 13.1 Protest Rule

Any team may protest a match within reason. They shall make the league president or committee member(s) aware of their issue as soon as possible. Once an IBL official is aware of a team protest, they will call for a committee hearing where the issue will be discussed, and a decision will be made in a timely manner.

**Note:** Because there is so many variables to the game the IBL does not want to dictate exactly what constitutes a good reason for a protest. However, we should not be protesting petty issues that would have little or no change in the outcome of a game or round. Issues that cause major changes such as, the outcome of the entire match would be more than reasonable.

### 13.2 Unsportsmanlike Behavior

Examples of unsportsmanlike behavior are as follows, but not limited to.

- Throwing or breaking of cue stick or other objects.
- Arguments that result in name calling, insults, or threats.
- Distracting players (sharking) while they are shooting.
- Fighting.

### 13.3 Sanctions to Unsportsmanlike Behavior

- Fighting: Fighting can result as an indefinite suspension. The length of suspension will be determined by the league committee members and/or the league president. Also, the establishment where the fight took place may have their own set of rules that include banning a person from the establishment for an indefinite period. While the player is serving the IBL suspension, they will be removed from their team roster and will not be eligible as a coach, scorekeeper, or other league night activity. They are not banned from watching their team play if the establishment allows them on the premises.
- Arguments, sharking, breaking, or throwing objects: These issues should be brought to the attention of the league president, committee members, and captains. Because there are many variables to every situation, league officials will discuss and shall deal with each situation in a prompt and fair manner. The focus is to deal with repeat offenders.

## 14.0 LEAGUE PRESIDENT DISCRETION

The league president holds the discretion to overrule any situation that may arise.

The goal of the IBL is to be fair to all who are part of our league. A committee has been formed to help govern our league. In addition, team captains will vote on a important issues at the beginning and throughout each session. On occasion, we will have league wide votes for all members to help determine how we operate and what they think is best for our league.