



## Pride Sports USA - Billiards Official Rules

Updated - May 8th, 2022

The rules for the Pride Sports Billiards League are adapted from the APA Game Rules<sup>1</sup>. It is impossible to cover every situation with rules. **Common sense must prevail.** Play within the Spirit of the Rules, as well as the written rules. Teams that try to gain an advantage by creating their own interpretation of rules are subject to sportsmanship violations. **Win at the table and not from the chair.**

### 1) Basics

- Pride Sports Billiards League format for play is a match of doubles 8-Ball games with 55 min of play.
  - i) Doubles Play - Two (2) teams of players compete in a 2-on-2 game. A team must have at least two (2) players present at game time to begin play and avoid a forfeit. At the discretion of the League, a delay in game start may be called to allow late players to arrive at the League venue.
  - ii) Alternating Play - Team players must alternate turns at play as the game progresses; the same team member may not take back-to-back turns at play. If a player is not present at the table to take their turn, play must wait until their return; the game clock is not stopped.
  - iii) Mid-game Substitutions - Teams may not substitute one or both players mid-game without the loss of that game; a new game must be called. The match may continue as normal.
  - iv) Forfeit - If there are not at least two (2) players on a team present to play, the team must declare a forfeit; the match win is awarded to the opposing team.
  - v) Alternating Games - Teams with more than two (2) players present must alternate players in games. No team player may play more than two (2) games back-to-back (note: teams with only two (2) players present are exempt from this rule).
- 8-Ball is played with a cue ball and a rack of 15 object balls. The primary purpose of this game is for teams to pocket the solid balls numbered from 1 to 7 or the striped balls numbered from 9 to 15, and then pocket the 8-ball before their opponent. Each player's category of balls is determined when the first player legally pockets a ball after the initial break (i.e., the table is considered open until a called or marked shot is pocketed).
- The turn passes from one team to the next whenever the player fails to pocket a ball of their category or fouls. A player legally pocketing a ball after marking or calling each shot of their category must continue to shoot until a foul occurs (i.e., no slop – all shots are intentional and vocalized).

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<sup>1</sup> American Poolplayers Association. "The Official APA/CPA Game Rules Booklet". Rules for League Years '2020/2021, '2021/2022, '2022/2023. <https://poolplayers.com/pool-rules/>. Accessed 14 April 2022.

- The team who pockets their entire category of balls first, then legally pockets the 8-ball, and calls all pockets, is the winner of the game. Teams score one (1) point for each game won during the match.

## 2) Winning the Match

- Matches are self-scored using flip scoreboards and timed with a countdown clock.
  - i) Matches are 55 minutes in length.
  - ii) No new games starting after 50 minutes.
  - iii) Games in play at the end of 55 minutes are awarded to the team with the fewest category balls on the table.
- The team with the most points at the end of the match wins.

## 3) Play

- **Lagging** determines which team will break first in a match.
  - i) Two players from the opposing team each place any ball (except the cue ball) behind the head string in "the kitchen". The goal is for each player to hit their ball to the foot rail with enough force to cleanly bounce their ball back toward the headstring without hitting the side rail. The ball closest to the head rail wins the right to break.
  - ii) Automatic loss of lag: failure to strike the foot rail, striking a side rail, pocketing lagged ball
  - iii) Requires re-lag: balls making contact with each other, both players fail to strike the foot rail, ball stops in the jaw of a pocket.
- **Racking** in 8-Ball consists of setting all 15 balls into a triangle rack as tightly as possible, with the 8-ball in the center. The remaining balls can be placed in any order.
  - i) Balls are racked by the non-breaking team, with the head (front) ball stopped on the foot spot (or center of the foot string).
  - ii) The common practice of alternating solid/stripe/solid within the rack is allowed, but not required.
- **Breaking**
  - i) Breaking privilege is determined by lagging for the opening game of the match, or is the privilege of the winning team from the preceding game.
  - ii) A legal break must occur with the cue ball struck from behind the head string. To be legal, 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 hitting the rack.
  - iii) Striking the head ball or second row of balls on the break is required. However,
    - (1) If the rack is struck but the break does not qualify as legal, the balls are re-racked by the non-breaking player and rebroken by the same breaking team.
    - (2) If the rack is struck but the break does not qualify as legal -and- results in a pocket or table scratch of the cue ball, the balls are re-racked and broken by the **opposite team**.
  - iv) Scratching on the break is a ball-in-hand foul whether off the table or in a pocket.
  - v) Pocketing the 8-ball on the break is a win unless the breaking player also scratches the cue ball, in which case it is a loss.
- **During an open table**, a player can shoot a combination involving stripes and solids; the legally pocketed ball will determine their category of balls for the remainder of the game.
- **Closing the table** to officially assign ball categories to each team is not determined by the break.
  - i) If a ball is pocketed during the break, the breaking player has the option to shoot any ball except the 8-ball (which would be a loss).
  - ii) The table remains open until the breaking team or the opposing team legally pockets a ball.

- **Play continues rotating** between members of each team until one team has pocketed all of their category object balls and legally pockets the 8-ball (i.e., to the marked pocket without a table or pocket scratch).
- **Plays on the 8-ball**
  - i) Pocketing the cue ball during a legal shot at the 8-ball results in an immediate loss.
  - ii) Pocketing the 8-ball while team assigned category balls are not cleared from the table (intentionally or accidentally) results in an immediate loss.
  - iii) The 8-ball may not be used as the first ball in a combination shot, as it is never neutral.

#### 4) Fouls

- **Fouling** must be called by the players or Team Captains; a foul not called when it occurs cannot be called once the next shot has taken place.
- The following fouls are recognized:
  - i) **Loss of Turn Fouls:**
    - (1) Failure to hit the correct / called ball first.
    - (2) Failure to pocket the correct / called ball after contact.
    - (3) Failure to keep one foot on the floor ONLY if there is a bridge available.
  - ii) **Ball-in-Hand Fouls:**
    - (1) Incorrectly jumping a cue ball.
      - (a) a legal jump shot is executed by shooting the cue ball down into the table slate and bouncing it over the intended object balls.
      - (b) jumping object balls by scooping the cue ball into the air is not allowed.
    - (2) Scratching the cue ball in a pocket, on the floor or otherwise off the table.
    - (3) Team member playing out of rotation.
    - (4) The player misses the 8-ball completely during a legal shot.
  - iii) **Friendly Fouls:**
    - (1) Touching or causing the cue or any object ball to move. Each team must agree to either
      - (a) shift the accidentally moved ball as close to the original position; or,
      - (b) the ball can be placed on the foot spot (the middle of the foot string).
    - (2) Playing out of rotation is a friendly foul with Ball-in-Hand consequences.
      - (a) if the opposing team does not call this foul before the next shot is taken, they do not receive ball-in-hand.
      - (b) the team that played out of rotation must assume the new rotation for the remainder of the match.
- The opposing team must execute Ball-in-Hand from behind the head string.

#### 5) Marking the pocket

- **Marking the pocket** is a physical means of indicating into which pocket the player intends the object ball to be pocketed.
  - i) A pocket marker is suggested but not required unless both teams agree to pocket marking for every shot.
  - ii) Marking the pocket with a cue-chalk square is not recommended.
  - iii) Both teams may use the same, single marker.
  - iv) Only one marker should remain on the table at a time.
  - v) If the marker is already at the intended pocket from a previous attempt or game, it is not necessary to touch it, pick it up, or have it repositioned.

- Alternatively, teams may agree to call category ball shots verbally.
- A pocket marker is **required** when legally shooting the 8-Ball.

## 6) Wins

- **Winning** is most simply accomplished when your team legally pockets all assigned category balls and the 8-ball with called or marked pockets.
- A win is also achieved if your opponents:
  - i) pocket the 8-ball out-of-turn or they knock it on the floor.
  - ii) pocket the 8-ball in the wrong pocket.
  - iii) pocket the 8-ball and foul the cue ball.
  - iv) alter the course of the 8-ball or the cue ball to prevent a loss.
  - v) scratch or shoot the cue ball off the table when shooting the 8-ball.
  - vi) pocket the last ball of their assigned category and the 8-ball in the same shot (in any order).

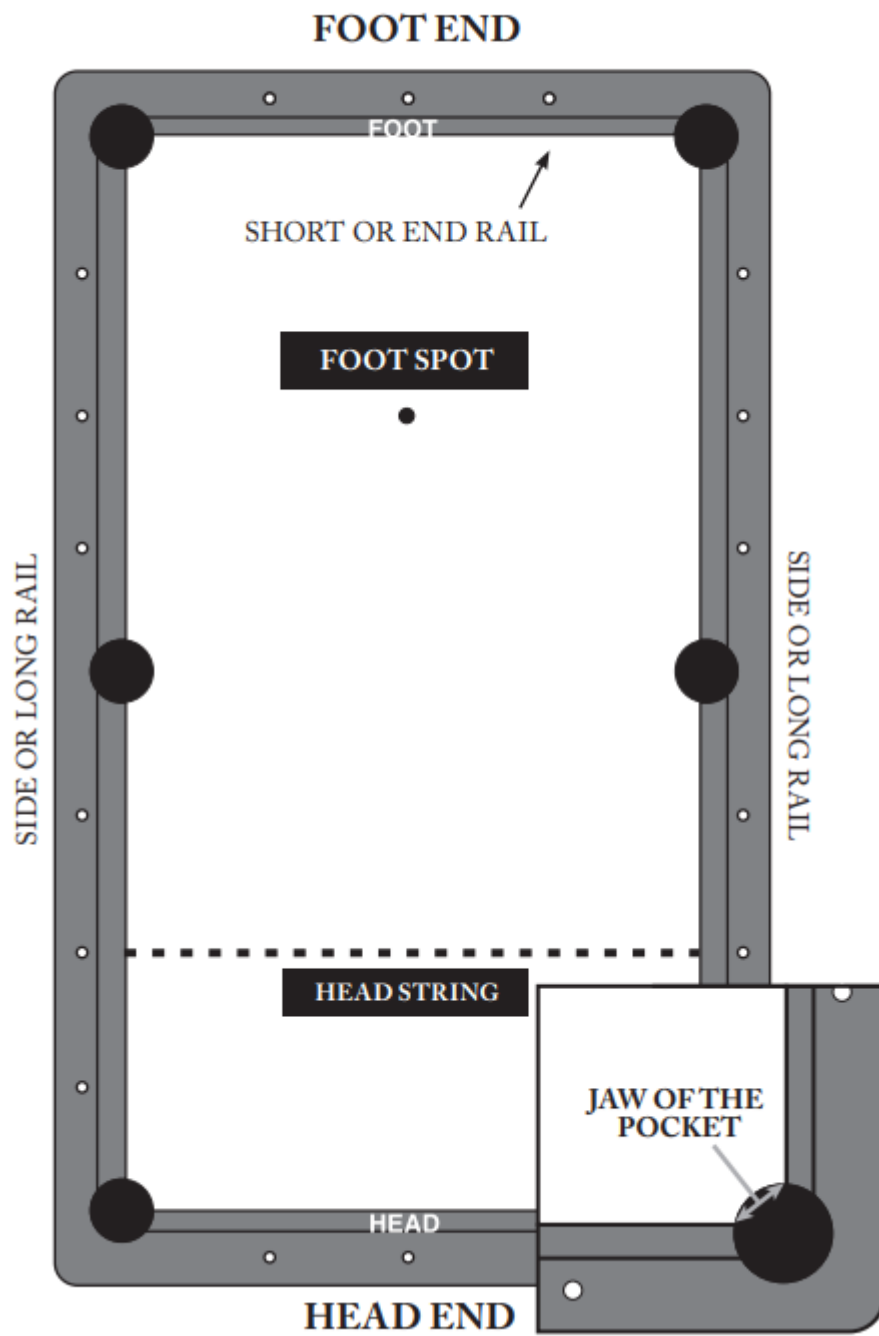


TABLE DIAGRAM

Figure 1: Table Diagram; source: see footnote 1