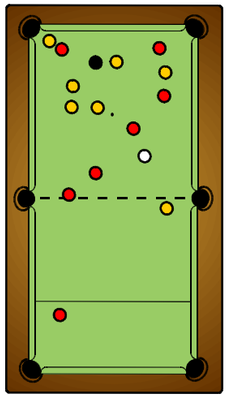
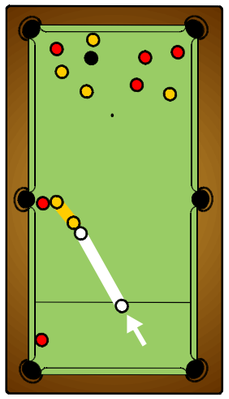
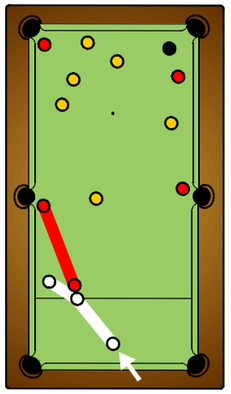
WORLD POOL-BILLIARD ASSOCIATION BLACKBALL RULES



It is a legal break if a ball is potted OR at least two balls fully pass over an imaginary line joining the middle of the centre pockets. If illegal, an opponent is awarded a free shot and one visit. See rule 4b.



In this situation, with an 'open table' at the start of the frame, a yellow is played directly onto a red which is potted. Reds become the designated group. Rule 4e lists shots in which groups cannot be decided and a table remains open.



A legal shot is defined under rule 5d. AFTER initial contact with an 'on' ball, if no ball is potted OR if no balls strike a cushion then the shot is ILLEGAL. This is the case above in which neither the red nor the cue ball touched a cushion.

1. BLACKBALL
The Game shall be known as blackball.
Play blackball in a sportsmanlike manner.
The referee is the sole judge of what is fair and unfair play and shall take whatever action is necessary to ensure the rules are observed.

2. EQUIPMENT AND TABLE LAYOUT
The game is played on a six pocket rectangular table with six cushions.
Equipment permitted ....
(a) A white ball called the 'cue ball'.
(b) Two groups of object balls consisting of seven red (or blue) and seven yellow balls. Alternatively use balls numbered 1 to 7 and 9 to15.
(c) A black ball (8ball).
(d) Spider rest, goose-neck rest, cross rest.
(e) Prescribed cues.
No other equipment is permitted unless ratified by the WPA.
The **playing surface** is the flat part of the table bordered by cushions.
The surface should be marked with a **black spot** at the intersection of two imaginary diagonal lines joining centre and corner pockets.
The cloth is marked with a **baulk line**. A straight line drawn from cushion to cushion 1/5th of the length of the table parallel to the face of the cushion which lies at the greatest distance from the black spot.
Baulk is the rectangular area bordered by the baulk line and three cushions.

3. OBJECT OF THE GAME
The player or team pocketing their group of object balls first in any order and then legally potting the black ball wins the game.

4. COMMENCEMENT OF THE GAME OR A RE-START
The opening break shot is determined by lag. The player winning the lag decides who breaks. Opening breaks alternate in subsequent frames. The exception is a re-rack for slow or negative play (rule 8g).
LAGGING PROCEDURE Balls should be of equal size and weight. Ideally use two cue balls, but when unavailable two object balls.
With 'ball in hand' behind the baulk line, one player to the left and one to the right of the table, balls are struck simultaneously towards the top cushion to return as close as possible to the baulk cushion. The player whose ball comes to rest closest to the edge of the baulk cushion wins.
It is automatic loss of lag if a ball ....
(a) Crosses into the opponent's half of the table
(b) Fails to contact the top cushion.
(c) Drops into a pocket.
(d) Jumps from the table.
(e) Touches a side cushion.
(f) Comes to rest on the playing surface within the area of a pocket past the nose of the baulk cushion.
Players will lag again if both players fall victim to automatic loss of lag rules or the referee is unable to determine which ball is closer.

4a THE RACK Arrange as shown with the black ball on the black spot.

4b THE BREAK The first shot of a frame is the break. To 'break', the cue ball is played from baulk at the triangle of object balls.
Frames commence when a player's cue tip contacts the cue ball.
(a) The break is legal if a ball is potted, OR at least two object balls fully pass an imaginary line joining the middle of the centre pockets.
(b) If it is an illegal break the opponent is awarded a free shot plus one visit. The cue ball can be played from where it lies OR from baulk OR there is a re-rack.

4c PLAYING FROM BAULK
(a) The cue ball must be in baulk when a shot is played. If the centre of the cue ball is on the baulk line this is deemed in baulk.
(b) The cue ball must be moved only by hand. Not with the shaft of the cue. The player may continue to adjust the position of the cue ball by hand until a shot is played. If the cue ball is touched with the tip of the cue a shot is deemed to have been played and it is a foul if it does not meet the requirements of a legal shot. Rule 5d.
(c) The cue ball may be played in any direction.
After a foul, if the player decides to play from baulk, position the cue ball without touching any other ball.
It is a foul, if during placement, the cue ball touches another ball.

4d BLACK BALL POTTED ON THE BREAK or on a re-rack ....
The balls are re-racked and the same player breaks again.
No penalty is incurred. This still applies if any other balls are pocketed, or leave the playing surface.

4e DECIDING GROUPS ON AN OPEN TABLE
Groups are NOT decided and the table remains open ...
(a) On a break shot.
(b) On a foul shot.
(c) If taking a 'free' shot after a foul.
(d) In a 'combination' shot in which balls from both groups are potted.
After the break the table is open and players may play balls from either group. The black ball cannot be used as an 'on' ball to pot an object ball, unless a foul has been committed and it is a free shot.
Given these exceptions, if a player pots a ball or balls from a single group the player is 'on' that group for the duration of the frame. The opposing player is designated the opposite group.

4f DECIDING GROUPS AFTER A FOUL SHOT
If a foul is committed on an open table and one or more object balls are pocketed, then those balls are ignored in determining groups.
The oncoming player then faces an open table and has a free shot playable from where the cue ball came to rest OR from baulk.
A player may play any ball on a free shot and the table remains open.

4g CONTINUING PLAY
In the course of play, if balls are potted and a legal shot is played then players are entitled to an additional shot.
This continues until a player either ....
(a) Fails to pocket one or more of the allotted balls OR
(b) Commits a foul.

4h CUE BALL IN HAND With 'cue ball in hand', play from anywhere within baulk in any direction. Legal placement is described in rule 4c.

4i TOUCHING BALLS Play away from any touching balls.
If the touching ball is an 'on' ball. The player is deemed to have played that ball. To play a legal shot, the player need only pot a ball from his/her own group OR cause any ball, including the cue ball, to strike a cushion.
If the touching ball is not 'on'. The player must play away and meet all of the normal requirements of a legal shot. See rule 5d.
On playing away from two or more touching balls. All requirements of a legal shot must be met. If not possible the game is a stalemate. See 4r.
Should a touching ball move while 'playing away' then this is a foul.

4j COMBINATION SHOTS
Two or more object balls can be potted without penalty in a single 'skill shot'. The potted balls may drop into pockets in any order.
In combination shots you may ....
(a) Contact a ball from your group first and pot balls from both groups.
(b) Play to pot your remaining group ball(s) and the black to win a frame provided initial contact is with a ball of your group and all balls are potted.
(c) Play the black ball (when the black ball is a ball 'on') onto an opponent's object ball and pot both balls to win the frame.
In combination shots after a foul, use a free shot to make initial contact with any ball. For example you may play an opponent's ball onto the black ball to pocket the black and win the frame, provided you are 'on' the black. In this instance it is not necessary to pot the opponent's ball (see rule 6b).

4k BALLS OFF THE TABLE
It is a foul if a ball leaves the playing surface, does not return by its own means and remains off the playing surface (other than when potted).
Balls are returned to the table as follows ...
(a) If a cue ball, it is played from baulk.
(b) Object balls are re-spotted.
If a ball returns to the table 'by its own means' then ....
(a) It is not a foul if a ball leaves the playing surface runs along a cushion and drops back onto the surface before coming to rest or falling into a pocket, provided other requirements of a legal shot are fulfilled.
(b) It is a foul if a ball leaves the playing surface and contacts a person, or an object that is not part of the table (such as a block of chalk) and then returns to the surface.

4m RE-SPOTTING AND RETURNING BALLS TO THE TABLE
If a **cue ball,** it is returned to the table and played from baulk.
An **object ball** is re-spotted with its centre point on the black spot or as near as possible to that spot in a direct line between the spot and the centre point of the cushion which lies furthest from the baulk line.
Object balls are re-spotted in the following order ....
(a) Black ball.
(b) Red (or blue or solid 1-7) balls.
(c) Yellow (or striped 9-15) balls.
Return balls as close as possible to other balls but without touching.

4n INTERFERENCE AND MARKING A TABLE
There is NO penalty if balls are moved in these circumstances ....
(a) By persons other than the players taking part in the frame OR
(b) As a result of players being bumped OR
(c) Events deemed not within a player's control.
The referee will return balls as closely as possible to their original positions.
A player may not use chalk or other object as a marker**.**
It is not a foul to place chalk on the table while in control but it should be removed before an opponent addresses the table.
Intentional marking, such as positioning chalk to aid a shot, is a foul.

4p BALL FALLING INTO A POCKET WITHOUT BEING HIT
(a) If a ball falls into a pocket without being hit by another ball, having been motionless for five seconds or longer, and being no part of any stroke in progress, it is replaced and play continues.
(b) If a ball falls into a pocket 'by itself' during a shot, so that it would have been hit by another ball were it still there, then it is replaced and all balls that moved during the shot are returned to their former positions prior to the next shot.
The player may then play the same shot OR chooses a different shot.
(c) If a ball balances momentarily on the edge of a pocket and then falls it counts as in the pocket and will not be replaced.

4q OBJECT BALL FROZEN TO, THAT IS TOUCHING, A CUSHION
When the cue ball makes first contact with an 'on' object ball which is 'frozen' to a cushion it is a foul if the shot does not result in ....
(a) A ball being potted OR
(b) The cue ball contacting a cushion OR
(c) The frozen ball contacting a cushion attached to a 'separate' rail OR
(d) Any other object ball contacting a cushion with which it was not already in contact before the shot was played.
A ball touching a cushion at the start of a shot which is forced into the same cushion is not considered to have struck that cushion unless it leaves the cushion, strikes another ball, and then contacts the cushion again.
An object ball is not considered frozen to a cushion unless this is announced by a referee or player prior to a shot being played.

4r STALEMATE If a situation arises where no legal shot is playable, see rule 5d, whether by accident or design, the frame is re-started.
If a re-rack is caused by accident, the original 'breaking' player breaks again. If due to slow or negative play, or by design, players lag to see who breaks. Re-racks may involve reduced numbers of balls. Rule 8g.

4s COMPLETION OF A FRAME OR GAME A frame is over when the black is potted on a legal shot (rule 5d) and all balls come to rest OR in a 'loss of frame' situation (rule 7).
The referee waits for the balls to stop moving and announces frame, game or match awarded to a player or team.
If the referee has not made this announcement and the balls are still moving, then a player will be penalized by **loss of frame** if a further shot is played OR the player interferes with the remaining balls.

5. FOULS

5a Potting the cue ball 'in-off' This includes the break shot.
Following an 'in-off' shot the player or referee may recover the cue ball from the basket (see rule 7e, preventing a ball going in-off).

5b Playing outside baulk when obliged to play within baulk.

5c Potting an opponent's ball without potting a ball from your own group (or the black if the 'on' ball) except when the table is open.

5d Failing to perform a legal shot.

LEGAL SHOT DEFINED :
To play a legal shot the player must cause the cue ball's initial contact to be with an 'on' ball and THEN must either ....
(a) Pot any 'on' ball or balls (see rule 6b) **OR**
(b) Cause the cue ball or any object ball to contact a cushion (see exception, rule 5g, snookers).

5e JUMP SHOTS The cue ball jumps over another ball.
If the cue ball leaves the bed of the table and does not strike an object ball that would have been struck had the cue ball not left the table on an otherwise identical shot then the cue ball is deemed to have jumped over that ball.
This is a foul.

5f PUSH STROKES Defined as the tip of the cue remaining in contact with the cue ball after it has commenced forward motion.

5g Failure to escape SNOOKERS by striking an 'on' ball.
A player is considered snookered when it is deemed impossible to hit any part of a ball 'on' by way of a straight line shot.
In escaping from a snooker the player need only cause the cue ball to contact an 'on' ball.
It is NOT necessary to pot a ball OR to cause any ball to contact a cushion AFTER escaping a snooker.
Players should seek confirmation of the snooker from an opponent, referee or official before playing a shot.

5h Striking the cue ball with any part of the cue than the tip.

5i Playing before balls have come to rest from previous shot.

5j Playing before balls that require re-spotting are re-spotted.

5k Playing out of turn.

5m DOUBLE HITS The cue tip contacts the cue ball more than once in the same shot. If the tip of the cue strikes the cue ball twice and the referee clearly sees or hears each contact, then it is a foul.

5n Playing a shot while not having at least one foot on the floor.
The exception is physical disability or other special needs.

5p Touching a ball. A player's body, clothing, jewellery or accessory, or part of a cue, with the exception of the tip in a legal shot, touches a ball.
A tip falling off a cue, or chalk dropped, is a player's responsibility.
Should these contact any ball on the table it is a foul. A player is responsible for equipment brought to the table but not that supplied at the tournament. If the end falls off a rest that has been provided for a tournament and it contacts a ball this is not a foul. This is 'supplied' equipment. Only if it is a player's own equipment is it a foul.

6. PENALTY AFTER A FOUL

6a Loss of control of table.
After any foul the offending player loses his or her next visit and the opponent has a free shot plus one visit.

6b ON A FREE SHOT AFTER A FOUL
The table is 'OPEN' and the oncoming player may take a free shot without nomination. On the first shot only, play the cue ball onto any ball without penalty.
On a free shot a player may ....
(a) Play or pot any of the opponent's balls.
(b) Play combination shots by playing directly onto an opponent's balls and thereby pot his/her own group of balls OR : play onto his/her own group balls and thereby pot any of the opponent's balls.
(c) Play the black ball onto, and pot, the opponent's balls OR : play the black ball onto, and pot, any balls from his/her own group.
(d) Play the black ball, but not pot it, unless it is the ball 'on'.
The black can be potted in combination shots as described in rule 4j.

6c Following any foul the cue ball may be ....
Placed in baulk OR played from where it lies on the bed of the table. Proceed as in rules 6(a) and 6(b). Moving the cue ball to and within baulk does not count as a shot or visit.

7. LOSS OF FRAME FOULS ARE AS FOLLOWS

7a Committing a foul in a shot in which the black is potted.

7b Potting the black . . . when any balls of the player's own group remain on the table after the shot has been played.

7c DELIBERATE FOUL
A player who clearly and intentionally plays a ball not 'on' has committed a deliberate foul resulting in loss of frame.
A player who clearly and intentionally fails to attempt to play a ball from his/her own group, or play an 'on' ball after a foul, will lose the frame.
Failing to make a bona fide attempt to play a legal shot is a deliberate foul and will result in loss of frame.

7d Deliberately touching or picking up a ball on the surface of the table without permission results in loss of frame.
Except when positioning the cue ball in baulk (rule 4c) only the referee can deliberately touch a ball on the bed of the table. If a referee is unavailable, ask an opponent to pick up the cue ball.

7e Catching or preventing a ball going 'in-off'.
If the cue ball is going 'in-off' and the player catches that ball, preventing it from dropping into the pocket and entering the table mechanism, then it is loss of frame.

7f Deliberately by word or action disrupting opponent's play.

8. GENERAL TOURNAMENT AND LEAGUE GUIDELINES

8a TIMED SHOTS AND FOULS Players have 60 seconds to play a shot, including the break shot or a shot with 'ball in hand'.
The referee starts timing when all balls come to rest from the previous shot (but see below, recovering an 'in-off' cue ball).
If a player has not played within 60 seconds it is a foul.
If 30 seconds elapse before a player has played a shot, the referee announces "**thirty seconds**".
The call must be made the instant that time has elapsed and not postponed because a player is about to play a shot.
The referee may recover the cue ball from the basket if a player is slow in doing so.
The referee will hand the ball to the player in control. As soon as the cue ball is handed over, or the player recovers the ball, the referee starts timing. The player has 60 seconds to play a shot.
A 'Time Out' is called for the following reasons ....
(a) Player requests a rest or bridge.
(b) Something or someone is obstructing the player.
(c) There is a 'touching ball' decision.

8b UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT The '**Spirit of the Game**' is be breached and a frame or match is awarded to an opponent.
Unsportsmanlike conduct may be regarded as ....
(a) Foul language.
(b) Throwing a cue around or unscrewing it as if to concede.
(c) Arguing with an opponent, spectator or referee.
(d) Continuously disagreeing with a referee's rulings.
(e) Interfering while an opponent is playing a shot.
(f) Not moving away from the table or out of an opponent's way after a visit.

8c COACHING Play without advice from others.
If, in the opinion of the referee, the result has been compromised in some way, it may be decided to award the frame to the opponent.

8d LEAVING THE PLAYING AREA
If a player has to leave the playing area during a match, the player must have the referee's permission.
This should happen only under exceptional circumstances. With no referee, players should take bathroom breaks between frames.

8e A referee may on request advise on the rules of the game.
The referee will explain the rule to the best of his ability. The referee must not provide any subjective opinion that would affect play, such as whether a legal shot can be played.
Referees cannot be held responsible for giving incorrect information. It is the player's duty to be aware of the rules.

8f The referee ensures excessive time is not taken on a shot.
This will be in accordance with local competition rules and guidance and is necessary when an event doesn't apply the 'time rule' described in rule 8a.

8g RE-RACKS with nine balls following slow or negative play.
Rack fifteen balls as normal. Remove the ball at the apex and the back five. Players must lag to determine who breaks.

8h In DOUBLES when a player approaches the table, conversation with others including a partner is unsporting and dealt with under competition rules.

8i PLAYING WITHOUT A REFEREE Disputes between players should be referred to tournament officials. Play stops to allow an official to be called, as protests must be made prior to any further shot being taken. Otherwise protests cannot be considered. If players fail to take this action no foul is considered to have occurred. Players must honour an opponent's request to halt play and summon an official**.**
Failure to do so may result in forfeiture of a frame or match.

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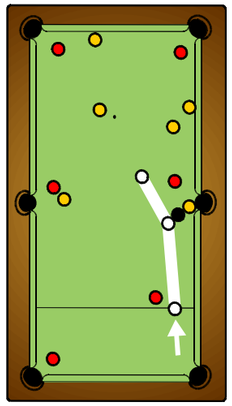
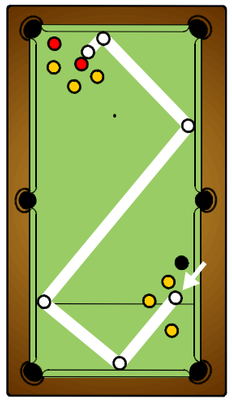
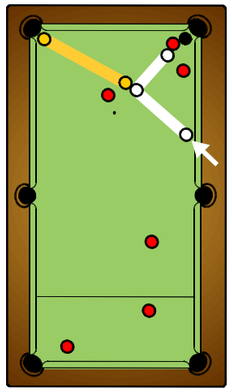


Following a foul, the opposing player has a free shot in which the cue ball can be played onto any ball, including the black. Also pot any ball (including the black if it is an 'on' ball). See rule 6b for details.



After successfully escaping from a snooker it is NOT necessary for a ball to be potted or for any ball to contact a cushion, as described in rule 5g. This is the exception to a legal shot which is defined in rule 5d.



Two or more object balls can be potted without penalty in a 'combination' shot provided an 'on' ball is struck first. Above, the player on yellows plays a combination to pot both the last remaining yellow and the black ball to win the frame. Rule 4j explains.

Blackball 8ball Pool Community Web Sites

Community Web Sites : wpa-pool.com blackball.co.uk englishblackball.com scottishblackball.com niblackball.com welshblackball.com ladiesblackball.com scottish8ball.com blackball.info blackball.tv blackballbanners.com Email : rules@blackball.co.uk