

The Rack & The Break:

- Anyone can rack the balls, including “racking your own”.
- The rack consists of the 9-ball in the center and the 1-ball at the front of the rack. No other pattern is involved or allowed.
- An illegal break shot occurs when the 1-ball is not hit first or in the absence of sinking a ball, less than 4 numbered balls hit a rail. The penalty for scratching while making an otherwise legal break shot is ball-in-hand anywhere on the table. The penalty for making an illegal break shot, (whether or not a scratch is involved), is for the in-coming player to have the choice of ball-in-hand or having a rerack (with choice of whom to break).
- Sinking the 9 on the break without fouling is a win. Sinking the 9-ball while fouling is not loss of game. The 9-ball is spotted and the opposing player has ball-in-hand anywhere on the table.

Legal Shot:

- After making initial cue ball contact with the lowest numbered ball on the table, a ball must be pocketed or hit a rail. This means ANY BALL including the cue ball. Note: hitting the rail first is not part of the determination of a legal hit. After the initial cue to object ball contact, the rail contact must occur.
- Hitting a “frozen ball” against the frozen rail does not count as hitting a rail.
- A legal break occurs when initial cue ball contact is with the #1 ball AND a numbered ball is pocketed OR 4 numbered balls hit a rail. A cue ball pocket scratching or not is not a determinant factor. In the case of an illegal break, the balls must be reracked. The opposing player has the choice as to who will take the break shot. In the case of a cue ball scratch during an otherwise legal break, the opposing player gets ball-in-hand anywhere on the table.

Call Shots: No shots are “called” in 9-ball. If a ball is sunk on a legal shot, being either the targeted object ball or some other ball sunk as the result of some sort of combination, the shooter continues onto his next shot.

Push Out: The player who shoots the shot immediately after a legal break may play a “push out” in an attempt to move the cue ball into a better position for the option that follows. On a push out, the cue ball is not required to contact any object ball nor any rail, but all other foul rules still apply. The player must announce his intention of playing a “push” before the shot, or the shot is considered to be a normal shot. Any ball pocketed on a push out remains pocketed except for the 9-ball. Following a legal push out, the incoming player is permitted to shoot from that position or to pass the shot back to the player who pushed out. The push out option exists only once in a game. It is solely for the first shot after the break taken by either the breaker, (if a ball was sunk on the break), or by the in-coming player, (if no ball was sunk on the break).

3 Fouls & Safety Shot: The BCA/CSI rule that calls for loss of game after three consecutive fouls is not enforced. The 8-ball safety shot where a player can make a ball and surrender the table does not apply in 9-ball. If a ball is legally pocketed, the shooter remains on the table.

Stalemate: Normally there are not any stalemates in 9-ball as the 3-fouls rule makes it superfluous. In the absence of the 3 foul rule, a stalemate may occur if, after 3 consecutive turns at the table by each player, 6 turns total, the referee determines that attempting to pocket or move an object ball will result in loss of game, the balls will be reracked with the original breaker of the stalemated game breaking again. The stalemate rule may only be used when there are only two balls remaining on the table.

Object Ball Frozen: 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. After the cue ball makes contact with the frozen object ball, the shot must result in either (1) a ball being pocketed, or (2) the cue ball contacting a cushion, or (3) the frozen ball being caused to contact a different cushion or (4) another ball being caused to contact a cushion to which it was not already in contact with. Failure to satisfy one of those four requirements is a foul. An object ball is not considered frozen to a rail unless it is examined and announced as such by the referee prior to that object ball being involved in a shot.

Fouls by Touching Balls

- Cue Ball before the shot: Moving the cue ball before the shot, even accidentally, is a foul, with ball-in-hand going to the incoming player.
- Numbered balls before the shot: Inadvertently moving or touching a numbered ball before the shot is not a foul. The referee will restore the ball to its original position and play continues.
- Cue Ball or Numbered balls during or after the shot: Moving, touching or changing the path of any ball is a foul, with the exception of the normal tip-to-cue-ball forward stroke contact of a shot. Ball-in-hand is awarded to the incoming player; referee does NOT restore any ball position.

End of Game: The game only ends when the 9-ball is legally pocketed. A legally sunk 9-ball can be part of an intentional or unintentional combination. A 9-ball pocketed on an illegal shot is spotted and play goes on with the in-coming player having ball-in-hand anywhere on the table.

Rule Documentation: The rules are presented in multiple documents. While every effort is made to keep them in perfect synchronization, it is possible for them to have an inconsistency. This can especially occur when there are midseason changes. The documents have a priority sequence for their authority. One rule document may not be played against another. Once an issue is addressed, there is no appeal to the next document in the sequence: 1. Scoresheet; 2. Rules of 9-Ball Summary; 3. 9-Ball Guidelines and Rules of Play; 4. NYGPL Guidelines and Rules of Play; 5. Official Rules of BCAPL/CSI.