

Eight Ball Billiards

The game that began as a nobleman's sport has evolved into a barroom staple. But make no mistake the game of billiards, and each of its offspring, still retains that noble spirit.

While proper billiards is rarely found in average clubs, a number of game variations have become popular with the pub and club set. One of the most popular tournament-style billiards games is "eight ball". In eight ball billiards, one set of numbered balls is split between two players. One player shoots for balls 1-7 (also called "solids" or "low balls") and the other plays balls 9-15 ("stripes" or "high balls"). The first player to pocket all of his or her balls, and then legally pocket the eight (black) ball, is declared the winner.

Eight ball is an easy game with very few regulations. There are however, a few rules to keep in mind:

- * When calling shots in this eight ball billiards, it is not necessary to indicate the pocket and ball when the shot is clear. If attempting a bank or combination shot however, you must declare your intention before proceeding to shoot.
- * If the ball you are shooting jumps off the table, the shot is considered foul. At this time you can choose to accept the table and take a shot, or shoot again with the cue ball placed behind the head string.
- * On your turn, your shot is only legal if it hits a group of your own billiard balls and either pocket a numbered ball, or cause a numbered ball or the cue ball to end up in a pocket. This does not apply to shots declared "open", or to break shots.
- * After a break shot, if no ball was pocketed and no group of balls determined, the table is still considered to be open. In other words, if a player breaks and sunk neither stripes nor solids, the table remains open.
- * A game may be acknowledged as a stalemate when six turns (three for each player) are taken consecutively and the next shot will result in the loss of the game. At this point, the game is re-racked, and the original breaker takes the break shot again.

Consult an official rulebook for a more concise description of all the rules to eight ball. To play a successful game you must be willing to learn and follow the rules, and retain the noble spirit of billiards.