

9-Ball Game Rules

Many of the rules concerning 9-Ball are similar to those used in 8 Ball. When this is the case, it will be so indicated. The rest of the details concerning 9-Ball follow.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

9-Ball is played with a cue ball and nine object balls numbered 1 through 9. 9-Ball is a rotation game, meaning the balls are shot in numerical order. The shooter must strike the lowest numbered ball on the table first. The game is over when the 9-ball is pocketed. A player retains his turn at the table as long as he strikes the lowest numbered ball first and legally pockets a ball. He need not pocket the lowest numbered ball to continue shooting. He may, for example, shoot the 1-ball into the 4-ball thus pocketing the 4. He would continue shooting and must, once again, strike the 1 ball first. **If the shooter shoots the 1-ball into the 9-ball and the 9-ball is pocketed, the game is over.**

RACKING

Nine balls are used and are racked in a diamond shape. **The 1-ball is at the front of the rack and on the foot spot. The 9-ball is in the center** and the rest of the object balls can be placed in any numerical order.

BREAKING

To be a legal break, players must break from behind the head string. The head ball must be struck first and 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 the rack. Failure to strike the 1-ball first does not result in a foul. If the rack is struck, but the break does **not** qualify as legal, the balls are re-racked and re-broken by the same player. If the rack is struck, but the break does **not** qualify as legal and results in a scratch, the balls are re-racked and broken by the opposite player. **THE RACK MUST BE STRUCK BEFORE A FOUL CAN OCCUR.** Breaking *safe* or *soft* is not allowed. The League Operator may make judgments and issue penalties to teams and players who are not breaking hard. Breaking just hard enough to comply with this rule is not a guarantee against penalties. Remember; break as hard as you can with control.

AFTER THE BREAK

Various circumstances can occur upon completion of the break. They are:

1. A foul on a legal break will result in *ball-in-hand* anywhere on the table for the breaker's opponent. Pocketed balls, if any, stay down (are not spotted), except the 9-ball.
2. No balls are pocketed and it is the other player's turn.
3. The 9-ball is pocketed. This is a win unless the player scratches, in which case the 9-ball is spotted and the turn passes to his opponent.
4. A ball or a number of balls are pocketed. It is still the breaker's turn and he shoots at the lowest numbered ball on the table.
5. Occasionally it occurs that a player mistakenly shoots the wrong ball. Although it is sportsmanlike for the sitting player to remind the shooting player he is about to foul by shooting the wrong ball, he is not required to do so. Once the shooter has hit the wrong ball, the foul has occurred whether the ball is pocketed or not. If the ball is pocketed, it is permissible, though not recommended, that the sitting player allow the shooting player to continue shooting until he feels inclined to call the foul. The shooting player can escape penalty by quietly realizing his error and returning to shoot the correct ball and striking it first on a shot prior to his opponent calling the foul. In other words, the sitting player must call the foul before the shooter has shot the correct ball.

6. On the shot immediately following a legal break, the shooter may play a **PUSH-OUT** shot. **PUSH-OUT:** The push-out was developed to take some of the luck out of pool. A player could *protect* his turn with a push-out. Push-outs can only be used immediately after the break by the breaker if he pocketed a ball on the break or by the incoming player if no balls were pocketed on the break. A player can elect to push-out if he doesn't like the shot he is faced with. The Push-out involves **announcing the intent to push-out before the shot**, or the shot is considered to be a normal shot, and then shooting the cue ball to a new position. The shooter doesn't need to satisfy the *legal shot* rule (driving a ball to a rail after a legal hit). Any ball(s) pocketed on a push-out does not count and are spotted. The shooter's opponent then has the option to shoot from the new position or tell the shooter to take the shot. Normal game rules apply from that point on.

COMBINATION SHOTS

Combination shots are legal and extremely common in 9-Ball. **Just make sure to hit the lowest numbered ball on the table first.**

BALLS ON FLOOR

Knocking the cue ball off the playing surface is a foul. **Knocking an object ball on the floor is not a foul.** Object balls that get knocked off the playing surface will be **immediately** spotted on the foot spot. If the foot spot is taken, the ball will be placed on a line directly behind the foot spot as close to the foot spot as possible. If two or more balls are knocked on the floor, they are placed in numerical order with the lowest numbered ball closest to the foot spot. Spotted balls are frozen to one another. It might occur that a player legally pockets a ball while simultaneously knocking some other ball(s) on the floor. In this situation, the ball(s) is spotted and the player continues shooting until he misses.

POCKETED BALLS

Balls must remain in a pocket to be legal. If a ball goes in a pocket but bounces back onto the playing surface, it is not considered pocketed.

Note: It occasionally happens on tables with small pockets that two balls become jammed in a pocket and are leaning over the edge of the slate to some degree. They are *off* the playing surface and are pocketed. Drop them in and resume playing the game unless the pocketing ends the game.

SPOTTING BALLS

Other than the circumstances described in **BALLS ON THE FLOOR** and the **Push-Out** rule, the only ball that would ever be spotted would be the 9-ball when the shooter has pocketed the 9 ball and scratched or otherwise fouled. If the shooter makes the 9 ball on the break and fouls or scratches, the 9-ball (and only the 9-ball) is spotted. If the shooter is shooting at the object ball and plays it into the 9-ball and pockets the 9-ball, but scratches or otherwise fouls in the process, the 9 ball is spotted. The incoming player has *ball-in-hand* and will be shooting at the lowest numbered ball on the table.

Note: If a ball which has been hanging in a pocket for more than a few seconds suddenly falls in, it is to be placed back on the table where it was originally sitting.

FOULS

The same as 8-Ball except as follows:

1. The exception concerning scratching on the break does not apply to 9-Ball. Scratching on the break is *ball-in-hand* anywhere just as other fouls.
2. The foul concerning striking the correct ball first applies, but ignore the reference to stripes or solids.
3. The foul concerning illegal aid still applies, but ignore the reference to reminding a player to call the 8-ball. The 9-ball does not have to be called; therefore, the pocket the 9-ball is going to be pocketed in does not have to be called.

In the unlikely event that a game should ever become **stalemated**, meaning that neither player wants or can make use of *ball-in-hand*, the game shall end, and the player who broke in the **stalemated** game will break in the new game