

General Rules of Snooker

Section 1: Equipment

1. The Standard Table (Metric)

Dimensions

The playing area within the cushion faces shall measure 3500mm x 1750 mm with a tolerance on both dimensions of +/- 3 mm.

Height

The height of the table from the floor to the top of the cushion rail shall be from 850 mm to 875 mm.

Pocket openings

There shall be pockets at the corners (two at the Spot end known as the top pockets and two at the baulk end known as the bottom pockets) and at the middle of the longer sides. The pocket openings shall conform to the templates authorised by the Billiards and Snooker Control Council.

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Baulk-line and Baulk

A straight line drawn 700 mm (1/5th the length of the playing area) from the face of the bottom cushion and parallel to it is called the Baulk-line and the intervening space termed the Baulk.

The "D"

The "D" is a semi-circle described in baulk with its centre at the middle of the Baulk-line and a radius of 292 mm (1/6th the width of the playing area).

Spots

Four spots marked on the centre longitudinal line of the table.

(i) the Spot:

320 mm (1/11th the length of the playing area) from the point perpendicular below the face of the top cushion.

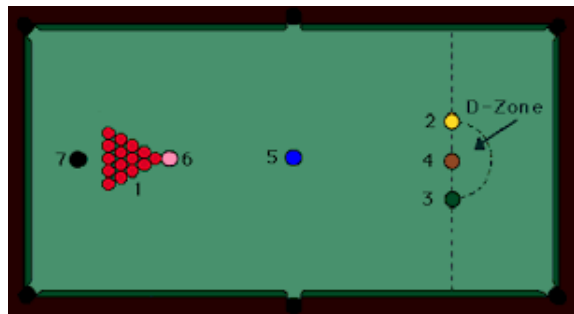
(ii) the Centre Spot:

midway between the centre pockets and equidistant from the faces of the top and bottom cushions.

(iii) the Pyramid Spot:

midway between the centre spot and the face of the top cushion.

(iv) the middle of the Baulk line.



2. Balls

(a) The balls shall have a diameter of 52.5 mm with a tolerance of +0.05/-0.08 mm.

(b) They shall be of equal weight within a tolerance of 3 gms per Snooker set.

3. Cue

The cue shall be not less than 910 mm in length and shall show no substantial departure from the traditional and generally accepted shape and form.

4. Ancillary

"Rests" may be used to provide a bridge for the cue.

Section 2: DEFINITIONS

1. Frame

A frame is completed when: conceded, or the black is finally potted or fouled.

2. Game

A game is an agreed number of frames.

3. Match

A match is an agreed number of games.

4. Balls

The white ball is the cue-ball.

The 15 reds, and the 6 colours, are object balls.

5. Striker

The person about to play or in play is the striker, and remains so until completion of the stroke or break (Sec. 2 Rules 6 & 12, below).

6. Stroke

(a) a stroke is made when the striker strikes the cue-ball with the tip of the cue.

(b) for the stroke to be a 'Fair Stroke' the following conditions must be met:

at the moment of striking, all balls must be at rest, and where necessary, colours correctly spotted.

the cue-ball must be struck and not pushed.

the cue-ball must not be struck more than once in the same stroke.

at the moment of striking, at least one of the striker's feet must be touching the floor.

the striker must not touch any other ball other than the cue-ball as in section (a) above.

a ball or balls must not be 'forced off the table'.

a stroke is not completed until all balls have come to rest and the referee has decided the striker has left the table.

7. In-Hand

the cue-ball is in-hand when it has entered a pocket or has been forced off the table.

it remains in-hand until played fairly from in-hand or a foul is committed whilst the ball is on the table.

8. Ball in Play

the cue-ball is in play when not in-hand.

object balls are in play when spotted and remain so until pocketed or forced off the table.

9. Ball On

Any ball which may be lawfully hit by the first impact of the cue-ball is said to be on.

10. Nominated Ball

A nominated ball is the object ball which the striker declares, or indicates to the satisfaction of the referee, he undertakes to hit with the first impact of the cue-ball.

11. Pot

a pot is when an object ball, after contact with another ball, and without any contravention of these rules, enters a pocket.

if a colour, it shall be spotted before the next stroke is made, until finally potted under Sec. 3 Rule 3.

if a stroke is made, with a ball or balls incorrectly spotted, and a foul is not awarded, the

ball or balls

if on the table will be considered to be correctly spotted.

if not on the table will be spotted when the foul is awarded.

12. Break

if a ball is potted, the same player plays the next stroke.

a break is a number of pots in succession made in any one turn.

13. Forced off the table

a ball is forced off the table if it comes to rest other than on the bed of the table or in a pocket.

if a colour it shall be spotted as per Sec 3 Rule 6 before the next stroke is made.

14. Foul

A foul is any act in contravention of these rules.

15. Snookered

the cue-ball is snookered when a direct stroke in a straight line to any part of every ball on is obstructed by a ball or balls not on.

if in-hand, the cue-ball is snookered only if obstructed from all positions on or within the lines of the "D".

if the cue-ball is obstructed by more than one ball, the one nearest to the cue-ball is the effective snookering ball.

16. Angled

the cue-ball is angled when a direct stroke in a straight line to any part of every ball on is obstructed by a corner of the cushion.

The option of playing from "Hand" when angled after a foul was removed from the rules in September 1995.

17. Occupied

A spot is said to be occupied if a ball cannot be placed on it without it touching another ball.

18. Push stroke

A push stroke is a foul and is made when the tip of the cue remains in contact with the cue-ball

when the cue-ball makes contact with the object ball, or

after the cue-ball has commenced its forward motion.

PROVIDED that where the cue-ball and an object ball are almost touching, it shall be deemed a fair stroke if the cue-ball hits the finest possible edge of the object ball.

19. Jump Shot

A jump shot is when the cue-ball jumps over any ball except when it first strikes the object ball and then jumps over another ball.

20. Miss

A miss is when the referee considers the striker has not endeavoured to hit the ball on.

Section 3: THE GAME

1. Description

The game of Snooker is played on an English Billiard Table and may be played by two or more persons, either as sides or independently.

Points are awarded for scoring strokes and forfeits from an opponent's fouls.

The winner is the player or side making the highest score or to whom the game is awarded under Sec. 4 Rule 2.

Each player uses the same WHITE cue-ball and there are twenty-one object balls - fifteen reds each valued 1 and six colours: yellow valued 2, green 3, brown 4, blue 5, pink 6 and black 7.

Scoring strokes are made by potting reds and colours alternately until all the reds are off the table and then the colours in the ascending order of their value, i.e. - yellow to black.

2. Position of Balls

At the commencement of each frame the object balls are positioned as follows:

BLACK on the SPOT

PINK on the PYRAMID SPOT

BLUE on the CENTRE SPOT

BROWN on the MIDDLE of the BAULK-line

GREEN on the LEFT-HAND

YELLOW on the RIGHT-HAND corner of the "D".

The reds in the form of a triangle, the ball at the apex standing as near to the pink as possible, without touching it, the base being parallel with and nearest to the top cushion.

3. Mode of play

(a) the players shall determine the order of play which (subject to Sec. 3 Rule 10) must remain unaltered throughout the frame.

(b) the first player shall play from in-hand and the frame starts with the first stroke.

(c) the cue-ball
must first hit a ball on, and
must not enter a pocket.

(d) a ball not on must not enter a pocket.

(e) (i) for the first stroke of each turn, until all are off the table, red is the ball on.
(ii) the value of each red, or ball nominated as red, potted in the same stroke is scored.

(f) if a red is potted, the next ball on is a colour, which if potted is scored. The colour is then re-spotted.

(g) until all reds are off the table the break is continued by potting reds and colours alternately.

(h) if the striker fails to score the next player plays from where the cue-ball comes to rest.

(i) the colours then become on in the ascending order of their values (Sec. 3 Rule 1) and when potted remain off the table (except as provided for in the next paragraph).

(j) when only the black is left the first score or foul ends the frame, unless the scores are

then equal, in which case:
the Black is spotted.
the players draw lots for choice of playing.
the next player plays from in-hand.
the next score or foul ends the frame.

(k) the striker shall to the best of his ability endeavour to hit the ball on. If the referee considers the rule infringed he shall call foul and miss.

4. To Play from In-hand

To play from in-hand the cue-ball must be struck from a position on or within the lines of the "D".

5. Hitting Two Balls Simultaneously

Two balls, other than two reds or a free ball and the ball on, must not be hit simultaneously by the cue-ball.

6. Spotting Colours

if a colour has to be spotted, and its own spot is occupied, it shall be placed on the highest-value spot available.

if there is more than one colour, and their own spots are occupied, the highest value ball takes precedence.

if all spots are occupied, the colour shall be placed as near as possible to its own spot between that spot and the nearest part of the top cushion.

if, in the case of the Black and the Pink, the space between its own spot and the nearest part of the top cushion is occupied, the colour shall be placed as near as possible to its own spot on the centre line of the table below that spot.

7. Touching Ball

if the cue-ball is touching another ball which is, or can be, on, the referee shall state TOUCHING BALL.

the striker must play away from it or it is a push stroke.

no penalty is incurred for thus playing away if:

the ball is not on.

the ball is on and the striker nominated such ball, or

the ball is on and the striker nominates, and hits first, another ball.

8. Ball on the Edge of Pocket

if a ball falls into a pocket without being hit by another ball it shall be replaced.

if it would have been hit by any ball involved in a stroke, all balls will be replaced and the stroke replayed.

if the ball balances momentarily on the edge and falls in, it must not be replaced.

9. Free Ball

(a) after a foul, if the cue-ball is snookered, the referee shall state FREE BALL.

(b) if the non-offending player takes the next stroke he may nominate any ball as on.

(c) for this stroke, such ball shall (subject to para(e)(i)) be regarded as, and acquire the value of, the ball on.

(d) it is a foul, should the cue-ball fail to first hit, or except when only Pink and Black remain on the table, be snookered by, the free ball.

(e) if the free ball is potted it is spotted, and the value of the ball on is scored.

(f) if the ball on is potted it is scored.

(g) if both the free ball and the ball on are potted, only the value of the ball on is scored (subject to Sec. 3 Rule 3(e)(ii)).

10. Fouls

(a) if a foul is committed:
the referee shall immediately state FOUL and on completion of the stroke announce the penalty.
unless awarded by the referee or claimed by the non-striker, before the next stroke is made, it is condoned.
any ball improperly spotted shall remain where positioned, except that if off the table it shall be correctly spotted.
all points scored before the foul is awarded or claimed are allowed.
the next stroke is made from where the cue-ball comes to rest.

(b) should more than one foul be committed in the same stroke, the highest value penalty shall be incurred.

(c) the player who committed the foul:
incurs the penalty prescribed (which is added to the opponent's score), and has to play again if requested by the next player. Once such a request has been made it cannot be withdrawn.
if a breach of Section 3.3 (k) occurs, the offending player has to play again from the original position, if requested by the next player.

11. Penalties

The following are fouls and incur a penalty of four points or the higher one prescribed.

(a) the value of the ball on: by striking
when the balls are not at rest (Sec. 2 Rule 6).
the cue-ball more than once (2-6).
with both feet off the floor (2-6).
out of turn (3-3).
improperly from in-hand (3-4).
the cue-ball to miss all object balls (3-3).
the cue-ball to enter a pocket (3-3).
a snooker with free ball (3-9).
a jump shot (2-19).

(b) value of the ball on or ball concerned: by causing
a ball not on to enter a pocket (3-3).

the cue-ball to first hit a ball not on (3-3).
a push stroke (2-18).
by striking with a ball incorrectly spotted (2-11).
by touching a ball with other than the tip of the cue (2-6).
by forcing a ball from the table (2-13).

(c) value of the ball on or higher value of the two balls by causing the cue-ball to hit simultaneously two balls other than two reds or a free ball and the ball on (3-5).

(d) a penalty of seven points is incurred if: the striker
after potting a red commits a foul before nominating a colour.
uses a ball off the table for any purpose,
plays at reds in successive strokes, or
uses as the cue-ball any ball other than white.

12. Ball Moved by Other than Striker

If a ball, stationary or moving, is disturbed other than by the striker it shall be repositioned by the referee.

13. Stalemate

If the referee considers a position of stalemate is being approached, he should warn the players that if this situation is not altered in a short period of time he will declare the frame null and void. The frame shall be restarted with the same order of play.

14. Four-handed Snooker

in a four-handed game each side shall open alternate frames, the order of play shall be determined at the commencement of each frame, and must be maintained throughout that frame.

players may change order of play at the beginning of each frame.

if a foul is committed and a request made to play again, the player who committed the foul plays again, and the original order of play is maintained.

when a frame ends in a tie Snooker Rule 3 (k) applies. The pair who plays the first stroke have the choice of which player plays that stroke. The order of play must then be maintained as in the frame.

partners may confer during a game but not whilst one is the striker and at the table or after the first stroke of his break.

Section 4: THE PLAYERS

1. Time Wasting

If the referee considers that a player is taking an abnormal amount of time over a stroke, he should be warned that he is liable to be disqualified.

2. Unfair Conduct

For refusing to continue a frame or for conduct which, in the opinion of the referee, is wilfully or persistently unfair a player shall lose the game. He is liable to be disqualified from the competitions held under the control of the Billiards and Snooker Council and its Affiliated Associations.

3. Penalty

If a game is awarded to a player under his section the offender shall:

- (i) lose the game, and
- (ii) forfeit all points scored, and the non-offender shall receive the value of the balls still on the table (each red counting eight points).

4. Non-striker

The non-striker shall, when the striker is playing, avoid standing or moving in the line of sight; he should sit or stand at a fair distance from the table.

5. Absence

In the case of his absence from the room he may appoint a substitute to watch his interests, and claim a foul if necessary.

Section 5: THE OFFICIALS

1. The Referee

(a) the referee shall:

(i) be the sole judge of fair and unfair play, and responsible for the proper conduct of the game under these rules.

(ii) intervene if he sees any contravention.

(iii) if a player is colour blind, tell him the colour of a ball if requested.

(iv) clean a ball on a player's request.

(b) he shall not:

(i) answer any question not authorised in the Rules.

(ii) give any indication that the player is about to make a foul stroke.

(iii) give any advice or opinion on points affecting play.

(c) if he has failed to notice any incident he may take the evidence of the spectators best placed for observation to assist his decision.

2. The Marker

The marker shall keep the score on the marking board and assist the referee in carrying out his duties.

NOTES

A ball or a set of balls may be changed with the consent of the players or on a decision of the referee.

It is the players' responsibility to both place the rest on and remove it from the table.

Using the cue to position the cue-ball: if the referee considers the player is not attempting to play a stroke, even though the tip of the cue touches the cue-ball, the ball is not in play.

If requested by the referee the striker must declare which ball he is on.

It is the strikers' responsibility to ensure that all balls are correctly spotted before striking.

Subject to Sec 3 Rules 8 & 12, reds are never replaced on the table despite the fact that a player may benefit from a foul.

If there is any one ball that is not so obstructed, the cue-ball is not snookered.

If there is any one ball that is not so obstructed, the cue-ball is not angled.

If the cue-ball finishes on the far side of the object ball, even though touching it in the process, it is considered to have jumped over.

After striking the ball on fairly if the cue-ball should then jump over the object ball after hitting a cushion, it shall be deemed a fair stroke.

The positions of the object balls are commonly referred to by the colour, e.g. black spot, pink spot, etc.

The player to strike first at each frame shall alternate during a game.

Aggregate scores: in games or matches where aggregate scores are relevant it is only

when the scores are equal as a result of the last frame that the above applies.

The ball on impossible to hit: in this situation it has to be considered that the striker is attempting to hit the ball on.

The referee will answer if asked if the ball is properly placed.

Movement of touching ball: if the referee considers that a touching ball has moved through an agency other than the player, it is not a foul.

No player shall be responsible for any disturbance of the balls by the referee.

If a game is awarded to a player: provided that where aggregate points scores apply, the offender shall also forfeit 147 points for each unplayed frame, to the number required to complete the game.

The referee will not answer a question regarding the difference in scores.

If requested by the striker, the referee or marker may move and hold in position any light shade which interferes with the action of the striker.