

# Blackball Pool Rules

This is a summary of World Pool Association Blackball Pool Rules.

## Objective of the Game

Blackball is played with **15 coloured object balls** and a **cue ball**.

The object balls consist of **two groups of seven** and the **black ball**.

Mostly the group balls comprise one group of reds and another of yellows.

Less often balls are coloured blue and yellow.

The black ball may sometimes be referred to as the **eightball**.

**The player or team potting their own group of object balls and legally potting the black wins the game.**

Players do not need to nominate any of the shots they are about to play in blackball pool.

## Terms Used

The **table** is comprised of **rails, cushions, pockets** and the **playing surface**.

The **foot end** of the table is where the object balls are placed at the start of a game.

The **head end** is where the cue ball is positioned when play is about to begin.

The cushions and pockets are considered parts of the head, foot and side rails.

The **baulk line** is parallel to the head rail. It is drawn one fifth of the length of the playing surface away from the head cushion.

**Baulk** is the rectangular area bordered by the baulk line and the three cushions at the head of the table.

The head cushion is often referred to as the baulk cushion.

After an illegal or foul shot is played an incoming opponent is given a **free shot**. That free shot may be played either from the existing position of the cue ball on the table, or from baulk.

When discussing playing options you may hear the words '**on**' ball.

An object ball is said to be on when it is legally playable.

A player is **snookered** when the cue ball cannot take a straight path to hit at least part of a target ball.

Snookers must be declared as such by a referee.

## Lag and Break

Play begins when a break shot is played from baulk.

However, before breaking, it is necessary to determine which player executes the first break shot of a match.

**It is the player winning the lag who will decide which player breaks.**

Prior to lagging a ball is placed on each side of baulk adjacent to, but not touching, the side cushions.

The objective of opposing players is to play their ball to strike the opposite foot cushion before returning and coming to rest as close as possible to the baulk cushion.

**The lag winner is the player whose ball comes closest to that baulk cushion.**

A player may lose the lag if, for example, his or her ball strikes a side cushion or drops into a pocket.

## The Rules of Breaking

**The cue ball begins in hand.**

That means it can be placed by the breaking player anywhere within the baulk area.

**On breaking at least one group ball must be potted or two object balls cross the centre string.**

That is a line joining the two centre pockets.

When two object balls fail to cross that line, and no group balls are potted, a **standard foul** is declared.

If the cue ball is potted or driven off the table, then that is a foul.

More about fouls and their consequences in blackball pool will follow.

**Any fouls on the break are ignored if the black ball is potted.**

If that happens the object balls are always racked again and the same player breaks.

## Determining Groups

In this game players do not nominate their group of object balls.

At the start of a frame, before players' groups have been determined, the table is said to be **open**.

**The table is open after the break, and remains open until a player pots a ball or balls from only one group in a normal legal shot.**

**The ball potted decides the group of that player.** However groups are not assigned if balls from both groups are potted on a shot, or on a free shot following a foul.

## Continuing Play

A player remains at the table while continuing to play legal shots, or until the frame ends.

If a player **does not pot any ball** on a shot and no foul has been committed the incoming player plays the cue ball from its current position.

**If a player commits a standard foul, play passes to the opposition.**

The incoming player then takes a **free shot** before continuing with his or her visit to the table in the normal way. That is provided of course the player does not commit a foul in the course of taking that free shot.

In taking a free shot an incoming player may play the cue ball from the existing position on the table or choose to have the cue ball in hand. In which case the player plays the free shot from baulk.

**When taking that free shot a player may, if he or she wishes, first strike or pot a ball or balls from the opponent's group.** On a free shot these are not considered fouls.

After a free shot play continues with a normal visit to the table.

## Standard Fouls

There are a number of so-called **standard fouls** in the game of blackball.

This term distinguishes them from fouls which lead to the automatic loss of a frame.

All standard fouls result in the incoming player receiving a free shot.

**On playing a normal shot it is a standard foul when an opponent's group ball is struck first or if only an opponent's group ball is potted.**

**However such play is not considered a foul if a player is taking a free shot**

When playing a free shot, after a foul has been awarded, a player may first strike or even pot a ball or balls from an opponent's group.

During normal play, or when taking a free shot, it is a **standard foul** when....

- **No balls contact a cushion after the cue ball strikes an object ball.** That is unless an object ball is legally potted on that same shot. The exception to this rule is in attempting to escape a snooker. It is not then necessary to strike a cushion when a shot is played. Of course if a player fails to escape a snooker it is a foul.
- **The cue ball is potted, or any balls leave the pool table.** They must be returned to the table, and placed in accordance with official blackball rules before play continues.
- **A player does not have a foot on the floor when the cue tip contacts the cue ball.**
- **Touching or moving the cue ball by hand.** The exceptions being that the cue ball may be moved by hand prior to breaking or on a free shot when positioning the cue ball in baulk.
- **A ball is accidentally touched during the course of a game by chalk, bridges or, for example, a player's hair or clothing.**
- **The cue tip contacts the cue ball more than once on a single shot.**
- **The cue tip is still touching the cue ball when the cue ball contacts an object ball.**
- **Tip to ball contact is prolonged beyond that seen in a normal shot.** That constitutes a push shot.
- **A shot is played while any balls are moving.**
- **A player unintentionally takes a shot out of turn.**

If the referee feels that a player is **playing too slowly** he or she may be advised to speed up play.

If the player does not comply a foul could be called.

## Combination Shots

In considering standard fouls it is important to understand the concept of a combination shot.

***In normal continuing play, that is when not playing a free shot, a player may strike an object ball from his or her own group and then go on to legally pot balls from both groups in that same shot.***

Note, the object ball struck first must be a player's own group ball, unless a free shot has been awarded.

When balls from both groups are potted in combination, it does not matter which balls fall into pockets first.

***Combination shots can also be played involving the black ball.*** Of course on playing a shot in which the black is potted in combination with any other object ball, the frame is won only if **no balls** from a player's own group remain on the table. Otherwise it's loss of frame.

The term **skill shot** is also used to describe combinations.

## Touching Ball

***When a player plays a cue ball away from a touching object ball that cue ball is considered to have struck that object ball.***

One consequence of this is that the cue ball need not subsequently contact another object ball when executing the shot. Though of course the other requirements of a legal shot must be met, such as striking a cushion.

It also follows that in playing away from a touching ball from his or her own group, the cue ball may then legally proceed to hit an opponent's group ball. This is possible because the player is deemed to have first struck the touching object ball from his or her own group.

## Loss Of Frame

Under certain circumstances a player may automatically lose the frame.

This happens when a player....

- ***Pots the black ball on an illegal shot.*** For example on a push shot.
- ***Pots the black on a shot that leaves any of his or her group balls on the table.***
- ***Intentionally strikes a ball which is not an 'on' ball.***
- ***Deliberately touches or picks up a ball when not entitled to do so.***
- ***Does not attempt to hit an 'on' ball.***

## Stalemate

In some games a situation may occur when **no legal shot is playable.**

***Whether this happens by accident or design it is a stalemate and the frame is restarted.***

The referee will decide whether a legal shot is possible.

The original breaking player breaks again if a stalemate has been called.

## Unsportsmanlike Conduct

Players should be made aware that penalties will be imposed for conduct considered unsportsmanlike.

The referee might issue a warning, call a standard foul, declare loss of frame, or the loss of a match.

***Unsportsmanlike conduct is any intentional behaviour that brings the sport into disrepute, or which disrupts the game to such an extent that fair play is affected.***

Such behaviour might include distracting an opponent, intentionally miscuing, marking the table, using equipment inappropriately or playing under the influence of drink or drugs.

This kind of conduct could result in ejection from a competition or even the forfeiture of prizes, trophies and competition points.

**That concludes the summary of blackball pool rules.**

There's further information about the rules of the game and the development and history of blackball on the website ***www.blackball.uk*** and associated twitter accounts.

***All the best.... and enjoy the world's fastest growing cue sport !***