

8-ball: the essentials

A short player reference for BCA / WPA world-standardized 8-ball.

Our league: Play all seven games in each matchup. Every game win counts in the standings. Arrange your weekly match with your opponent at R&J;'s.

Set up and start

Rack tightly: apex ball on the foot spot, 8-ball in the center, one solid and one stripe in the rear corners. [2] The first player listed on the schedule breaks in Game 1. Players alternate breaks for the remaining games. (League rule.)

Choose your group and keep shooting

The break leaves the table open. A legally pocketed called ball assigns solids or stripes. Normally, either group may be contacted first while open, but not the 8-ball. Keep shooting when you legally make your called ball. [2]

Call ball and pocket when unclear; rails and incidental contacts need not be called. [1, §1.7]

Call a safety before shooting to end your turn even if a ball falls. Pocketed object balls stay down. [2]

Finish on the 8-ball

Clear your group first, then legally pocket the 8-ball in its called pocket. [2]

Situation after the break	Result
Pocket the 8-ball early, in the wrong pocket, or with a foul	Lose the game.
Drive the 8-ball off the table	Lose the game.
Scratch while shooting at the 8, but the 8 stays on the table	Ordinary foul; opponent gets ball in hand.

Ordinary fouls give the opponent cue-ball placement anywhere. Break-shot exceptions are on page 2. A stalemate is re-racked with the original breaker. [2]

The break shot

Use this page when something unusual happens on the break.

Break from the kitchen (behind the head string). No call or specific first contact required. Pocket a ball or send four object balls to rails. [1, §4.3]

What happened?	What happens next?
Ball pocketed; no foul	Breaker continues; table remains open.
Nothing pocketed; four balls reach rails	Opponent shoots from the position left.
Nothing pocketed; fewer than four balls reach rails	Opponent accepts position, re-breaks, or lets the breaker re-break.
8-ball pocketed legally	Breaker chooses: spot the 8 and continue, or re-break.
8-ball pocketed with a foul	Opponent chooses: spot the 8 and take cue-ball in hand in the kitchen, or re-break.
Scratch or other ordinary break foul	Opponent accepts position if playable, or takes kitchen ball-in-hand.
Object ball driven off the table	Foul; ball stays out (spot the 8). Opponent accepts position or takes kitchen ball-in-hand.

Two details worth remembering

Kitchen ball-in-hand: cross the string before contacting a kitchen ball; balls on the string are playable. [1, §§1.6, 3.11]

If a group is gone while open, temporarily claim it to shoot the 8. [1, §4.4]

Fouls and quick decisions

Call a foul before the next shot starts. [3]

Foul	What to watch for
Scratch / ball off table	Cue ball pocketed or off the table; an object ball driven off the table.
Wrong first contact	Contact a legal target first. Once assigned, hit your group first until it is cleared. [2]
No pocket and no rail	After object-ball contact, at least one ball must reach a rail if no ball is pocketed.
Touched ball	Accidentally moving a ball with your hand, clothing, cue or equipment is a foul under full rules.
Double hit / push	Do not strike the cue ball twice or prolong tip contact. Close-ball shots can cause double hits.
Moving balls / wrong turn	Wait until balls stop moving and spinning; shoot only in your turn.
No foot on floor	At least one foot must touch the floor when the cue tip strikes.

Close balls and careful calls

With the cue ball frozen to a legal object ball, shooting toward it can be legal. Playing away does not count as contacting it. Have the position checked first. [3]

Full rules include object-ball touching fouls; this is not cue-ball-fouls-only play. [3]

League rule: No jump shots.

Three-foul automatic loss does not apply to 8-ball. [1, §3.13]

Keep the match moving

For a close hit or disputed position, pause before the shot and ask the league administrator to watch or rule. Record the game result once the decision is settled.

This is an independent plain-language summary, not the complete rulebook. The current official rules control unusual situations. Break order, no jump shots, league administration and the seven-game format are local arrangements. BCA/WPA is the rules basis used here; BCAPL/CSI has a separate rulebook.

Official references

[1] [WPA Rules of Play](#) - effective September 15, 2025; January 2026 file. General rules, fouls and 8-ball (§§1-4).

[2] [BCA: Eight Ball](#) and [3] [BCA: Fouls](#) - legacy reference sheets; current-rule exceptions use [1]. Prepared October 15, 2026.