

## 11. ULTIMATE POOL LEAGUE (UPL) 8-BALL RULES

---

### Section 1 — Spirit of the Game

UPL 8-Ball is played in a fair, respectful, and sportsmanlike manner at all times. Players are responsible for knowing the rules and conducting themselves appropriately. Unsportsmanlike conduct may result in penalties including standard fouls, loss of rack, or further disciplinary action at the discretion of league officials.

### Section 2 — Equipment

UPL 8-Ball is played on a standard six-pocket pool table using:

- One cue ball
- Seven solid balls
- Seven striped balls
- One 8-ball
- Cue sticks (players may switch cues during a match, including break cues)
- bridge or rest
- Cue extensions (built-in or add-on)
- Chalk compatible with the table cloth
- Gloves
- Reasonable amounts of hand powder

Jump shots are not allowed in UPL 8-Ball.

Equipment must be used only in its intended manner. Misuse of equipment is a standard foul.

#### Definitions

Playing Surface: The flat area inside the table rails.

Head String: The imaginary line between the second diamonds on the side rails at the breaking end of the table.

### Section 3 — Objective of the Game

Players are assigned either solids or stripes.

The objective of the game is to legally pocket all balls from a player's assigned group and then legally pocket the 8-ball in a separate shot.

Pocketing the 8-ball early, or in the same shot as the final group ball, results in loss of rack.

## Section 4 — Lag for Break

A lag determines which player breaks first.

Each player simultaneously strikes a ball from behind the head string toward the foot rail. The player whose ball comes to rest closest to the head rail wins the lag.

A player automatically loses the lag if their ball:

- Crosses into the opponent's half of the table
- Fails to contact the foot rail
- Contacts a side rail
- Is pocketed
- Leaves the table
- Comes to rest on the playing surface within the area of the corner pocket

Players must strike their lag shots at approximately the same time. If one player's ball reaches the foot rail before the opponent's ball is struck, the lag will be replayed.

If both players commit a lag foul or the result cannot be determined, the lag is replayed.

Breaks alternate after the first rack unless otherwise specified by match format.

## Section 5 — The Rack

The object balls must be racked in the official UPL rack pattern.

The 8-ball must be placed on the foot spot.



All remaining object balls must be placed according to the required solids-and-stripes pattern shown in the official UPL rack diagram. Ball placement is determined by group, not by individual ball numbers.

The rack must be tight and properly aligned before the break shot is taken.

If the rack is incorrect before the break, the balls must be re-racked.

If the rack is incorrect after the break has been played, the result of the break stands and play continues.

## Section 6 — The Break

The breaker must place the cue ball behind the head string and may not position it beyond the head string by more than half of its diameter.

To perform a legal break, the breaker must earn a minimum of three cumulative points:

- 1 point for each object ball pocketed (including the 8-ball)
- 1 point for each object ball that completely crosses the imaginary center line between the side pockets without being pocketed

If a legal break is not achieved, the balls must be re-racked. The opponent then chooses who breaks.

A rack cannot be won or lost on the break shot.

If the 8-ball is pocketed on the break, it is re-spotted on the foot spot after all balls have come to rest. If the foot spot is occupied, the 8-ball is placed as close as possible on a direct line between the foot spot and the center of the foot rail. If that position is not available, place the 8-ball as close as possible on a direct line between the foot spot and the center of the head rail.

If the cue ball is pocketed (scratch) on the break, the incoming player receives one visit with cue ball in hand behind the head string and may shoot in any direction.

If the cue ball leaves the table on the break, or commits any other standard foul, other than scratching into a pocket, the incoming player receives cue ball in hand anywhere on the table.

If the breaker pockets one or more object balls on a legal break, the breaker continues their turn. This includes pocketing only the 8-ball, which is re-spotted before play continues.

If no balls are pocketed on a legal break, the incoming player plays the next shot.

The table remains open after the break.

## **Section 7 — Open Table and Assigning Groups**

The table is considered open immediately after the break.

Balls pocketed on the break do not determine groups.

Groups are assigned when a player legally pockets a ball after first contacting and pocketing a ball from the intended group.

If the intended group (solids or stripes) is not obvious, the player must clearly declare their intended group before the shot is taken. Failure to declare the intended group when it is not obvious will result in a loss of turn.

If both a solid and a stripe are pocketed in the same shot, the player's group is determined by the intended group that was struck first by the cue ball.

If a player strikes one group first but pockets only a ball from the opposite group, it is loss of turn and the table remains open.

Groups cannot be assigned on a foul shot.

If the cue ball is touching (frozen to) an object ball while the table is open, the player must declare the intended group before the shot is played. Failure to declare the intended group will result in a loss of turn.

## Section 8 — Combination Shots

Combination shots are allowed and do not need to be called.

A player must first contact a ball from their own group before pocketing any ball in a combination shot.

If a player legally strikes a ball from their group first, balls from either group pocketed during the same shot remain pocketed.

If a player attempts a combination shot and pockets only an opponent's ball, it is loss of turn.

On an open table, the first ball contacted by the cue ball must be from the intended group, and a ball from that group must be pocketed in order to establish groups.

If a player contacts one group first but pockets only a ball from the opposite group on an open table, it is loss of turn, and the table remains open.

## Section 9 — Legal Shot

To play a legal shot, the cue ball must first contact a ball from the player's own group.

After that contact, the shot must result in either:

- A ball being pocketed (except the 8-ball when it is not legally on), or
- The cue ball contacting a rail, or
- Any object ball contacting a rail

If these requirements are not met, the shot is a standard foul.

Simultaneous contact between object balls is permitted, provided at least one contacted ball is from the player's own group.

## Section 10 — Loss of Turn

A loss of turn occurs when a player fails to pocket a ball on a legal shot but does not commit a foul.

When a loss of turn occurs, the incoming player plays the cue ball from its current position.

Loss of turn includes:

- Attempting a combination shot that pockets only an opponent's ball
- Playing a defensive shot that pockets only an opponent's ball
- On an open table, contacting one group first but pocketing only a ball from the opposite group
- Failing to declare the intended group when required on an open table.

## Section 11 — Standard Fouls

A standard foul results in the incoming player receiving one visit with cue ball in hand anywhere on the playing surface, unless otherwise specified.

When cue ball in hand is awarded, the player may position the cue ball anywhere within the permitted area using the hand or any part of the cue. The cue ball may be adjusted multiple times until the shot is played. A forward striking motion with the cue while positioning the cue ball is not permitted.

If the cue ball is frozen to another ball when cue ball in hand is awarded, the cue ball must be repositioned before the shot is played.

Standard fouls include:

- Pocketing the cue ball (scratch), except as otherwise defined on the break
- Failing to first contact a ball from the player's own group
- Failing to complete a legal shot
- Playing a shot before all balls have come to rest
- Playing out of turn
- Playing before balls that require re-spotting have been correctly replaced
- Double-hitting the cue ball
- Playing a push shot
- Playing a shot without at least one foot touching the floor
- Touching or moving any ball with the body, clothing, equipment, or cue
- Striking the cue ball with any part of the cue other than the tip during a legal stroke
- Striking any object ball with the cue
- Marking the table to assist a shot
- Playing from outside the required starting area when cue ball in hand is restricted behind the head string
- Leaving the playing area during a rack without notifying the opponent or match official
- Receiving coaching during a rack when coaching is not permitted under Section 12
- Committing a time violation under the shot clock
- A ball leaving the playing surface and not returning on its own
- Failing to play away correctly from a confirmed frozen or touching ball
- Intentionally playing a shot that causes the cue ball to jump over another ball

If the cue ball leaves the playing surface and passes over an intervening ball that it would otherwise have contacted, the shot is considered a jump shot and is a standard foul.

## Section 12 — Coaching

Coaching is not permitted during a rack unless allowed by the match format, player division, or league regulations.

Where coaching is permitted, the number and timing of coaching opportunities are determined by league or event rules.

Coaching includes advice on shot selection, cue-ball control, positional play, safety play, or strategy.

Any coaching received outside the permitted limits results in a standard foul.

## Section 13 — Loss of Rack Fouls

A player loses the rack if any of the following occur:

- Intentionally committing a foul
- Pocketing the 8-ball before all balls from their group have been legally pocketed (except on the break)
- Pocketing the final ball from their group and the 8-ball in the same shot
- Committing a standard foul while pocketing the 8-ball (except on the break)
- Deliberately failing to attempt to contact a ball from their own group
- Deliberately striking the cue ball with any part of the cue other than the tip during play
- Deliberately striking any object ball with the cue
- Deliberately moving any ball other than as part of a legal shot or authorized cue ball placement (except following an all-ball foul)
- Deliberately stopping a ball in motion while on the playing surface
- Playing another shot or deliberately moving balls after legally pocketing the 8-ball and before all balls have come to rest

### Sportsmanship Violations (Loss of Rack)

A Loss of Rack foul may be issued for serious sportsmanship violations, including, but not limited to:

- (a) A second offense of foul or abusive language during the same match (a verbal warning will be issued for the first offense)
- (b) Throwing, striking, or unscrewing a cue in a manner that suggests concession of the rack or displays unsportsmanlike conduct
- (c) Repeatedly arguing with the opponent, referee, or match officials after a ruling has been made
- (d) Interfering with an opponent while they are at the table, either verbally or physically

The League Operator or referee may issue additional penalties if the conduct is deemed serious, repeated, or disruptive to league play.

## Section 14 — Frozen / Touching Balls

A ball is considered frozen only if it is confirmed as frozen by the opponent or match official before the shot is played.

If an object ball is confirmed frozen to a rail and is struck first by the cue ball, the shot must still satisfy the requirements of a legal shot by:

- Pocketing a ball, or
- Causing the cue ball to contact a rail, or
- Causing the frozen ball to contact a different rail, or
- Causing another object ball to contact a rail that it was not already touching

Failure to satisfy these requirements results in a standard foul.

If the cue ball is frozen to an object ball, the shooter may not shoot directly through the frozen ball. The cue ball must be played away at an angle of ninety (90) degrees or greater from the line of contact, or another legal shot requirement must be satisfied. Failure to do so will result in a foul.

Slight movement of a frozen ball caused by the cue ball separating from it does not constitute a foul if the shot is otherwise legal.

When the table is open and the cue ball is frozen to an object ball, the player must declare the intended group before the shot is played.

## Section 15 — Balls Leaving the Playing Surface

A standard foul occurs if any ball leaves the playing surface during a rack and does not return to the table by its own means.

If the cue ball leaves the playing surface, the incoming player receives cue ball in hand anywhere on the table.

If an object ball leaves the playing surface, it must be re-spotted.

Object balls are re-spotted by placing the center of the ball on the 8-ball spot, or as close as possible on a direct line between the 8-ball spot and the center of the foot rail.

If that position is not available, the ball is placed as close as possible on a direct line between the 8-ball spot and the center of the head rail.

When multiple balls require re-spotting, they are returned in the following order:

1. The 8-ball
2. Solids
3. Stripes

Re-spotted balls must be placed as close as possible to their designated positions without touching another ball.

## Section 16 — Outside Interference

Outside interference occurs when balls are moved or the position of play is affected by events beyond the control of the players.

Examples include:

- Contact by a spectator or other person not involved in the rack
- Any other external event affecting the position of the balls

When outside interference occurs, there is no penalty to either player.

The balls will be restored as closely as possible to their original positions by a match official or by agreement between the players if no official is present.

A re-rack will be granted only in exceptional circumstances when the original positions cannot be reasonably restored.

## Section 17 — Balls Falling Without Being Hit

A shot is considered complete once all balls have come to rest.

If a ball falls into a pocket after a shot is complete, and the ball was not struck as part of the shot, the ball must be returned to its original position.

A shot is considered in progress once the cue ball has been struck and until all balls have come to rest.

If a ball falls into a pocket during a shot in progress, and the ball was not struck and would not have been affected by the shot, the ball must be returned to its original position after all balls have come to rest.

If a ball falls into a pocket during a shot in progress, and the ball would have affected the outcome of the shot, all balls are restored to their original positions.

After the balls have been restored, the original player continues their turn without penalty unless a foul occurred on the shot.

## Section 18 — Shot Clock

UPL 8-Ball is played with a 30-second shot clock. The shot clock begins once all balls have come to rest.

The tip of the cue must make contact with the cue ball before the shot clock expires.

Each player is permitted one extension per rack, which adds 30 seconds to the remaining time.

The player must request the extension before the shot clock expires.

Failure to play a shot within the allowed time results in a standard foul.

## **Section 19 — Stalemate Situations**

A stalemate exists when no legal path is available for the cue ball to contact a ball from the player's own group.

If a player believes a stalemate exists, the player must request a stalemate decision before taking a shot.

A stalemate decision will be made by a match official or an independent third party. If neither is available, both players may mutually agree that a stalemate exists.

When making a stalemate decision, the player's ability level is not considered.

If a stalemate is confirmed, the rack will be re-racked, and the player who originally broke the rack will break again.

If a stalemate is not confirmed, play continues.

## **Section 20 — Completion of a Rack**

A rack is complete when the 8-ball is legally pocketed and all balls have come to rest, or when a loss-of-rack foul occurs.

A rack is not considered complete until all balls have stopped moving.

## **Section 21 — Player Responsibility**

It is the responsibility of each player to be familiar with the UPL 8-Ball Rules.

League officials will make reasonable efforts to ensure that the rules are available to all players. However, the ultimate responsibility for understanding and following the rules rests with each individual player.

No relief will be granted based on a player's failure to obtain or understand the rules.

## **Section 22 — League Authority and Final Decisions**

The League Director, Tournament Director, or designated match official has the authority to interpret and enforce the UPL 8-Ball Rules.

In situations not specifically covered by these rules, the decision of the League Director, Tournament Director, or designated match official is final.