

# **PREFACE**

THE OFFICIAL 9-BALL RULE BOOK HAS BEEN CREATED TO GIVE TAP PLAYERS A GENERAL GUIDE FOR SHOOTING LEAGUE, TEAM 9-BALL. NOT ALL SITUATIONS WHICH MAY OCCUR IN 9-BALL MATCHES CAN BE COVERED IN THIS RULE BOOK.

SHOULD DISPUTES ARISE TO YOUR LICENSEE, WHO WILL MAKE DECISIONS FOR YOU, WHILE THE MATCH IS BEING PLAYED. THE CORPORATE OFFICE WISHES TO THANK MR. MEL LOCKE, LICENSEE OF SOONER TAP, MR. MICHAEL WINKLES AND THE DIRECTORS OF SOONER TAP FOR THEIR ASSISTANCE IN PREPARING THIS 9-BALL RULE BOOK.

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# TAP OFFICIAL RULES FOR TEAM 9-BALL

Object of the Game- Team TAP 9 Ball is played with nine object balls numbered 1 through 9 and the cue ball. On any shot the cue ball must contact the lowest numbered ball on the table first to constitute a legal shot. Once you have contacted the lowest numbered ball, any completions that follow allow you to continue your turn at the table. In 9-ball, as long as you have contacted the lowest numbered ball on the table first, a completion of that ball and/or any other ball is a legal shot. The shooter does NOT have to call their pocket for balls 1 thru 8, but they do have to call combinations and the 9 ball. The pocket for the 9 should also be marked. A player wins the game when he/she has legally pocketed the 9-ball. Should the 9 ball be pocketed out of turn, the 9 ball does get spotted. Good luck and enjoy TAP 9 ball!!

## **1. Beginning play**

### **1.1 Choosing your first player**

Games commence with opposing Team Captains or player tossing a coin to determine who will be the first to announce a player. The winner of the coin toss has the option to either choose a player from his or her team, or have the opposing Team Captain or player choose a player from their team to start the first game of the first match. After this has been determined, player selections will be alternated for the following matches until all league matches are completed. A player can represent their team in active play once per night and represent that specific division on only one team per night. A player may only play on one table at a time. Multiple nights and division play are accepted and encouraged.

### **1.2 Lagging for break**

Once you have selected your players, they must lag to see who breaks. Once two players have been selected, they must **simultaneously** "lag" for break. The "lag shot" is executed by striking an object ball from behind the head string, to the foot rail, and attempting to have it come to rest closest to the head rail. The "lag" is considered a skill shot and should never be aborted in favor of a coin toss. The winner of the "lag" has the option of breaking, or awarding his/her opponent the break. In subsequent games, the winner of the previous game breaks and the loser racks the balls. In cases where the cue ball is of different weight or size from the other balls, it should not be used for the "lag". If your lagging ball is pocketed or contacts a side rail you lose the lag. If the two lagging balls make contact, players must re-lag.

### **1.3 Racking the balls**

The objects balls, numbered 1 through 9, are racked in a diamond shape with the 1-ball on the foot spot and the 9-ball in the center of the diamond. Before the break, the 1-ball also needs to be touching the two balls adjacent to it. If this is not the case, the person breaking can ask for a re-rack. As common courtesy to the other players make the rack as tight as possible for a good break, other players will do the same for you.

### **1.4 The break shot**

The player entitled to the break has cue ball-in-hand behind the head string. The breaking player must first drive the cue ball directly into the head ball, causing at least 4 balls to hit a rail. Pocketing a ball constitutes a legal break. If this task has not been accomplished, the opposing player is entitled to ask for a new rack and may elect to break. **This is at the non-breaking player's discretion.** An attempt to break that results in the cue ball crossing the head string, but not hitting the rack, is a foul. In this case, **the opposing player has the option to take the break or allow the breaking player another attempt at the break.** If any balls, other than the 9-ball, are driven off the table during the break shot, those balls stay down and are not spotted. All objects balls that are pocketed remain down. If the 9-ball is driven off the table, then the 9-ball is spotted. It is then ball-in-hand for the incoming player. (NOTE: For scoring, the breaker gets the number of balls added to his or her score under the "made on break" (MOB) column).

### **1.5 Cue ball off the table**

If player drives the cue ball off the table, it is then the incoming player's turn, ball in hand (anywhere on the table).

## **2. Continuing play after the break**

If the player pockets a ball on the break, that player continues to shoot until he/she misses or commits a foul, plays defense. When this happens, your opponent assumes control of the table and does the same until the game ball is legally pocketed. NOTE: If a foul is committed on any shot, the incoming player has cue ball-in-hand anywhere on the table.

### **2.1 "Push out" after a legal break**

The "push out", also known as "roll out", is allowed one time only on the shot immediately following the break. The player executing this shot must clearly announce their decision to their opponent before shooting or it is treated as a normal shot. To execute this shot you may shoot the cue ball anywhere on the table. The cue ball is not required to contact a rail nor is the shooter required to contact the lowest numbered ball on the table. **Any balls pocketed on a push out stay down and count as a completion on your score sheet, with the exception of the 9-ball, which is spotted. Spotted balls are not counted as completions in this case. Following the push out the opponent has the option to shoot or pass the shot back to the player who executed the push out.** In this case, the player must accept the shot as set forth under the General Guidelines for play. (NOTE: Scratching on a push out is a foul).

### **2.2 Continuing play**

After a legal break or legal push out, the player who has command of the table continues to shoot until they miss, foul or win the game. This is continued until a winner is determined.

### **2.3 Skill Shot/Good Hits**

The shooter must contact the lowest numbered ball on the table first to execute a legal hit. **You do not have to call your pocket for balls 1 thru 8. Combinations and the 9 ball must be called. The pocket for the 9 should also be marked.**

During play, a ball on the table (any ball) must contact a rail. Pocketing a ball also constitutes contacting a rail or a good hit. If the cue ball strikes any ball other than the lowest numbered ball on the table or the cue ball is pocketed, or ball fails to hit a rail, this is a "bad hit". A bad hit means a foul has been committed and the opponent comes to the table with cue ball in hand anywhere on the table.

### **2.4 Shooting/Marking the 9-ball**

In TAP team 9-ball the 9-ball is always the game ball for both players. If the 9-ball is pocketed in the marked pocket, the game is over, however, if a foul is committed while the 9-ball is pocketed then the 9-ball is spotted and it is ball-in-hand for the incoming player. It is scored as a miss, and if any other balls were dropped, they are scored as dead balls for the shooting player.

### **2.5 Marking Combination Shot**

In TAP team 9-ball combination shots are allowed and are a very popular method of winning a game or match. A legal shot must be executed (i.e. the player must strike the lowest numbered ball on the table) for the shot to count. **Marking the 9 ball during a combo/carom-** If the player intends to pocket the 9 ball during a combo/carom, the pocket must be marked. If the 9 ball drops in the marked pocket during a "legal hit", the game is over, and the 9 ball would be scored as a completion, and any balls that were made during that shot, would be scored as dead balls.

If the 9 ball did not drop in the marked pocket, but any balls have dropped, it is still that players turn and the dropped ball would be scored as a completion, any others would be scored as dead balls. If the 9 ball dropped in any pocket, other than the marked pocket the 9 ball is spotted.

### **2.6 Defensive/Safety shot**

A safety shot is a very important shot. To play a defensive (safety) shot, you still must execute a legal shot by hitting the lowest numbered ball on the table first, and drive a ball to the rail. A player must call a defensive (or safety) shot when not attempting to pocket an object ball. The opposing player has the right to ask the scorekeeper to record that shot as a defensive shot. The players should work out any disputes, and when necessary, the League Director has the final say. Not noting a defense shot repeatedly is un-sportsman-like and disciplinary actions could be taken against that player. **Player must call defense prior to the shot and marked as a (def) defensive shot. This is part of your handicap, so mark them.**

### **2.7 Ball frozen to the rail**

This is when an object ball is touching the rail and becomes part of the rail. The opponent must declare the ball frozen before the shot is executed. If the intended object ball is frozen the shooter must do one of the following: Have the cue ball touch a rail after contacting the object ball, or object ball or another ball contact a rail after a good hit is made on the object ball.

## **3. Fouls**

There is **NO** "Three foul" rule in TAP 9-ball league. A player committing a foul must relinquish his/her turn at the table. The following are examples of commonly occurring fouls.

### **3.1 Foot fouls**

During any shot, a shooter must have one foot on the floor or they have fouled and the incoming player has cue ball-in-hand anywhere on the table. (NOTE: This rule does not apply to players who are physically impaired).

### **3.2 Bad hit**

If the first ball contacted by the cue ball is not the lowest numbered ball on the table, it is a bad hit and considered a foul. Your opponent would have cue ball-in-hand. If player double taps the cue ball with tip of his/her cue stick, it is also a foul.

### **3.3 Scratch/Ball off the table**

If a player pockets the cue ball or drives the cue ball or any ball off the table, it is a foul. If a player executes a shot and then scratches, the shot is considered complete and ball stays down, unless the 9-ball drops or is driven off the table then it is spotted. Any other ball stays down and ball-in-hand for incoming player.

### **3.4 Failure to drive a ball to a rail**

A player must either legally pocket a ball or drive a ball to a rail after making a good hit or they have fouled.

### **3.5 Push shot**

**When the cue ball and object ball are within the width of a standard chalk, or frozen, it is best to elevate your cue up to a 45 degree angle in line with your body, to eliminate any chance of a double hit or shoveling your cue which could end up being a foul and ball-in-hand to your opponent.** This shot should be executed by stroke and not forcing. We ask that a player make a bonafide attempt to execute this shot in the proper manner.

### **3.6 Split hits**

When a player contacts the lowest numbered ball on the table and another ball at the same time, this does not constitute a foul. If it is suspected that a player may play a shot that might result in a "split hit," the non-shooting player should ask that a league official, referee or another player (that is not on either team) observe the shot. **In this instance, it would be that individual's duty to watch, and if necessary, call the hit. In the absence of an observer, should a controversy over the hit arise, the shot goes to the shooter.**

### **3.7 Accidental movement of ball**

If a player moves the cue ball prior to their shot it is a foul and results in ball-in-hand to your opponent. If a player accidentally moves or touches any ball(s), other than the cue ball, that are at rest, it is not considered a foul. If 1 or more balls have been moved, the opponent has the option to leave the ball, or balls where they are, or move them back to original position. If a player moves or touches any ball before it comes to rest, it is a foul ball-in-hand to your opponent.

### **3.8 Interference and "sideline" coaching**

Any person who interferes with the course of the match by offering advice, distracting a player or otherwise disturbing play, can subject their player to a foul. In this instance, the match referee must warn the individual involved and that player's team captain/coach and player. After the warning, the penalties go as follows. 1st a warning, 2nd ball-in-hand for opponent, 3rd loss of game, 4th loss of match, 5th-team disqualified. Penalties do not start over after each match. They continue from first match to last match, for both teams. As a team player on the sideline we encourage you to support your player. However, you are responsible to do so in a sportsmanlike manner.

### **3.9 Slow play**

**Slow play can result in a ball-in-hand foul to your opponent, if you have been warned and continue to play slow.** A 45 second shot rule exists and will be used as the benchmark for assessing slow play. If a player is taking a significantly long amount of time to execute a shot, **the opposing player or coach has the right to ask a league official or the players coach to administer a slow play warning.** If, after being warned, the player continues to play slowly, the opponent will receive cue ball-in-hand. In all matters concerning slow play, the decision of the League Director/referee will be final. (Note: Most of our leagues are played at night and it is important for the matches to be completed in a timely fashion). **All players should note that after a match has been completed a team has five (5) minutes to field another player, or the match may be subject to forfeit.** This also stands true when picking your player for the next match. Please do so in a timely manner. A player should be picked and ready to shoot no later than five (5) minutes after each match.

## **4. GENERAL RULES**

### **4.1 Payment of league fees**

All teams and individual players are responsible for the payment of league fees. Forfeit matches are no exceptions. The full amount agreed upon should be paid at the end of play. Any team or player (s) owing any fees can result in that team or player(s) having match points deducted from their standings at any time, as well as losing the opportunity to participate in any event that the team or player(s) qualified for, regardless of the teams or divisions past, present or future time of qualification. This also includes annual memberships. Note: Bye positions can vary by geographic location.

### **4.2 Coaching**

A player is allowed to receive coaching from a fellow teammate **who has been designated as the coach prior to the start of each match.** Only one coach may be designated for each player's match and may not be changed during that match unless approved by the opposing team. The player or team coach for each team is entitled to call two (2) "time-outs" per game, lasting no more than one-minute each. **Once a time out has been called both players can communicate to their coach during that time out.** Players with a two (2) Level handicap, receive two (2) one (1) minute time outs, and unlimited assistance with their coach. All unlimited assistance and the shot execution has to be within a 45-second time period. During a time-out, the coaches must cease communication with their players, and the player must execute his/her shot in a timely fashion. **If the coach disrupts the balls or marks the table in any way, or touches any ball "in play", or places the cue ball on table it is a foul.** (NOTE: An outside player on the team can talk to the coach, who can then relay that information to the player during a present time out within the time limit). **If the (1) minute time limit is exceeded and called by the opposing team, the player can take an additional (1) minute at the cost of a time-out, if they have a time-out remaining.** The link to the player is through the coach. No other passage to that player is allowed). The coach cannot mark the table, although he can touch the table. **If the coach asks the player if they want time out, then it will be considered a time out.**

### **4.3 Shot clock**

In our leagues, there is a 45-second time limit to your shot. The time limit commences after your opponent's shot ends, and all the balls come to rest. If a timeout commences in the middle of your decision making process, the time remaining on the clock is still in use. (Note: Depending on your area, an official clock might not be in use, but shot times will be monitored as closely as possible.)

#### **4.4 Time-Outs**

Any player is entitled to 2 time outs per game. Each time-out is 1 minute in duration. Remember the game belongs to the players at the table.

#### **4.5 Protests and Disputes**

In our leagues the match belongs to the two players at the table. **With this comes the responsibility of paying attention to your match whether you or your opponent is on the table.** You have the right to protest a situation. Just remember, a protest needs proof in order to be evaluated. If your protest cannot be substantiated with proof, you could lose your match point for false protest. If you and your opponent are paying attention and sportsmanship/common sense are utilized, there will be no reason for protests or disputes

#### **4.6 Fielding a team - "The 25 rule"**

To field a legitimate 5 - player team, the sum total of the shooting players handicap may not exceed 25. A team can play their players in any order they choose as long as the "25 Rule" is not violated. Should a team be unable to field 5 players with total handicaps of 25 or under, they may allow 4 players to shoot whose total handicaps are 21 or less, or 3 players whose handicaps total no more than 18. In either case, the team must forfeit the number of matches short of 5 matches that it does not shoot. Any player on the team's roster counts toward being able to field 5 players, at or under 25, whether present or not. Those players not present can be forfeited at the team captain's discretion at any time during the match.

#### **4.7 Adding and dropping players**

Generally speaking, no team should have more than 8 players on its roster. Any team may add a player to their roster during the session, but remember each player must have 6 matches (forfeits and playoffs do not apply) to be part of the team. Choosing a team is your responsibility not league directors or operator. Teams competing in events they qualified for during the session are to use their team roster of players from that session. There are no substitutions.

#### **4.8 The Known player rule**

The league operator, or other league official may assign a player that is brought into the league and does not have a previous handicap or league experience, a handicap. If his/her skill level is known, then that will be their starting handicap.

#### **4.9 Professional players**

Individuals who hold current membership in a men's or women's professional billiards association are not allowed to compete in TAP, LLC's handicapped league events. Our leagues are intended strictly for the amateur player. Although we have all skill levels of players in our Association, we still need to provide a comfortable level of protection for the recreational player.

#### **4.10 Make-up Matches**

Some operators allow makeup matches and some do not. For those teams wishing to make matches up, it is important that the match be noted on your score sheet so that the credit can be applied to the correct team. Also, make-up matches must be agreed upon by both teams and has approval by the league director before they are considered official. All make-up matches should be completed within two (2) weeks of the date of the scheduled match. No matches can be made up within the last two weeks of league play. When a new division is starting, the league director may offer a new team make-ups or what is referred to as position rounds to allow that team to catch up. (NOTE: all make-ups are at the sole discretion of the league directors.)

#### **4.11 Forfeits**

League matches can be forfeited. The following circumstances are some examples: A scheduled team match does not commence within fifteen (15) minutes of the scheduled match time. 5 points will be awarded to the team present with no less than 5 players. A team is unable to field a player whose handicap is appropriate for the given match, as described by the criteria set forth under the "Team Total Handicap Rules/Criteria" clause. If you do not post a player within the required time frame, that match can be forfeited. Un-sportsman-like conduct can result in a match being forfeited. A match can be forfeited if the player shooting their match is not current with league fees or submission of wrong data or any form of cheating. All forfeits should be properly marked on the score sheets. **For a team to claim a forfeit, it must identify a player to use for statistical purposes on Open stats. All forfeited matches assigned to a player will not count as one of their (6) six required matches. (Note: your league fees for the forfeited match are still due regardless if the match was played or not.) It is impossible to**

**document all cases where forfeitures may apply.** We recommend that you stay within the guidelines of the rules and play with the spirit and intent of the rules, as good sportsmen should.

#### **4.12 Concession**

If a player concedes, he loses the match. The unscrewing of a jointed cue stick, except to change a shaft, is considered to be a concession. A player must notify their opponent if they plan to change the shaft, or the match is considered a forfeit.

#### **4.13 Byes**

In some leagues, there will be an uneven number of teams competing during a league session. When this happens, a BYE will be written into the schedule to even out the schedule. On a night when a team is scheduled to receive a "BYE," it will be credited three (3) points for that match. In the event a team drops out of a session, the bye will come in the next week of play. Teams dropping out of session are uncontrollable, and can happen. When it does, it creates a problem for the teams scheduled to play. Because of a team dropping later in the session, the remaining teams must take a bye instead of having the opportunity of playing for maximum points. That is out of our control as a league. We hope you will do your best as a team to complete your session.

#### **4.14 Handicapping**

League handicaps are based on raw data taken from your score sheets for each league match. Complete, clear and accurately marked score sheets are a must. Players, Team Captains, League Representatives, League Directors or Licensees do not have the right to change any data on the official roster. There is always the possibility that an error has been made when posting data. If this seems to be in question, the matter should be called to the attention of the League Director, who will be responsible for addressing the matter. If you question your League Director's response, please feel free to contact the League Operator. Forging a roster is a serious issue that will be addressed. A player joining the league who has not had a previously established handicap will play a race to 3 and will be counted as a "4" for purposes of the "25 rule" (unless he/she is brought in under the "Known Player" rule, in which case, he/she will shoot under the handicapped race grid.) When a player with an established handicap plays a new player, his/her established handicap will be counted towards the "25 rule". After this match, the new player's handicap will be subject to the same criteria as all other players, and will be evaluated based on his/her performance in subsequent league matches.

#### **4.15 Score keeping**

A league score sheet must be fully completed for every match played. As this is the vehicle that determines your handicap, it is extremely important that these forms be completed accurately and neatly. Make sure either the Team Captain or a team player review or compare the sheets before leaving. Once the sheets have left the league location, they are final. **As a rule, each team should assign a score keeper, however, there are cases where one person keeps score for both teams.** In this case, these are the scores that will be used for accounting purposes without dispute. It is a matter of courtesy during league play that a player never keeps his/her own score because of their need to be able to concentrate on the game. **However, after a player shoots, it is suggested that they keep score for the next team player.** NOTE: your league report sheets are the result of your paperwork. If there are make-up matches or players to add/drop from your team they should be noted on the report sheet. If there are players with no "Player ID #'s", write it out in a note to the league office and put it in your team folder/packet so it can be properly taken care of. Make sure you have first and last names, and "race to" on the sheet. This allows us to cross-reference the player if needed. **Playing on two tables is allowed, however, both team captains must agree it upon.**

***After all the rest, Why not the best! USA and Canada – TAP ON!***