

Songtan-Si Pool League Rules of Play

As of 3 March 2015 -- All previous editions shall not be used

1. INTRODUCTION

a. The following outlines rules of play for the Songtan-si Pool League (SSPL). They will be used and adhered to during all forms of SSPL play, to include regular season, playoff, and tournament play.

b. The SSPL Board is ultimately responsible for any changes to these rules of play. Rule change procedures are outlined in the SSPL Constitution; however, SSPL members are encouraged to bring to the Board's attention any rule or wording of a rule that might require review or potential change. The Board has also established the position of SSPL Rules Ombudsman to act as a trusted intermediary between the SSPL general membership and the Board regarding SSPL rules of play.

2. DEFINITIONS - The following outlines specific definitions of terminology used in the Rules of Play:

Ball-In-Hand – Cue ball may be put into play anywhere on the playing surface. **The cue ball may be positioned using the cue stick.**

Break Shot – The first shot of the match intended to break a rack and possible pocket balls.

Called Shot – Requires that a player designate, in advance of every shot, the ball to be made, and the pocket into which it will be made. It is not necessary to indicate details such as the number of cushions, banks, kisses, caroms, etc.

Safety/No Call Shot -- For tactical reasons a player may choose to pocket an obvious object ball and also discontinue his turn at the table by declaring safety/no call in advance. A safety/no call shot is defined as a legal shot. If the shooting player intends to play safe by pocketing an obvious object ball, then prior to the shot, he must declare a safety/no call to his opponent. If this is NOT done, and the shooter's object ball is pocketed, the shooter will be required to shoot again. Any ball pocketed on a safety/no call shot remains pocketed.

NOTE: This rule is from the BCA 8-Ball rules. The 'no call' has been added because that has been the standard 'safety' term in our league since inception. The no call stems from the relaxed requirement to call a shot. If it is obvious which ball is going in which pocket then you need not call that shot. So if it is obvious and the player wishes to forfeit their turn after the shot they would use no call. (If this is still confusing to your opponent then just call it in a different pocket, make it in the obvious pocket, and set down.)

Cue - Tapered device, usually wooden, used to strike the cue ball to execute a pool shot.

Cue Ball - The white, un-numbered ball that is always first struck by the cue during play.

Cue Tip - A piece of specially processed leather or other fibrous or pliable material attached to the shaft end of the cue that contacts the cue ball when a shot is executed.

Double Hit - A shot on which the cue ball is struck twice by the cue tip on the same stroke.

Foul – An infraction of the SSPL Rules of Play.

Jump Shot - A shot in which the cue ball is stroked in a manner which causes it to jump over another ball.

Jumped Ball - A ball that has left and remained off the playing surface as the result of a stroke.

Lag For Break - Procedure used to determine starting player of game. Each player shoots a ball from behind the head string to the foot cushion, attempting to return the ball as closely as possible to the head cushion (see Figure One below for more details).

Masse Shot - A shot in which extreme english is applied to the cue ball by elevating the cue butt at an angle with the bed of the table of anywhere between 30 and 90 degrees. The cue ball usually takes a curved path, with more curve resulting from increasing cue stick elevation.

Match - The course of play between two opponents that starts after the balls have been racked and ends at the conclusion of a legal shot which pockets the 8-ball.

Miscue - A stroke which results in the cue tip contact with cue ball being faulty. Usually the cue tip slides off the cue ball without full transmission of the desired stroke. The stroke usually results in a sharp sound and discoloration of the cue tip and/or the cue ball at the point of contact.

Object Ball – The particular ball being played on a shot.

Player – The individual(s) playing a match.

Rack - The triangular-shaped frame equipment used for gathering the balls into the break formation required to start the game.

Shot - An action that begins at the instant the cue tip contacts the cue ball, and ends when all balls in play stop rolling and/or spinning.

Split Hit - A shot in which it cannot be determined which object ball(s) the cue ball contacted first, due to the close proximity of the object balls.

Stance - The position of the body during shooting.

Table – The flat, cloth-covered surface of the table within the cushions. 3. Equipment – For the purpose of these rules, Figure 1 outlines the Pool Table along with specific positions on the table.

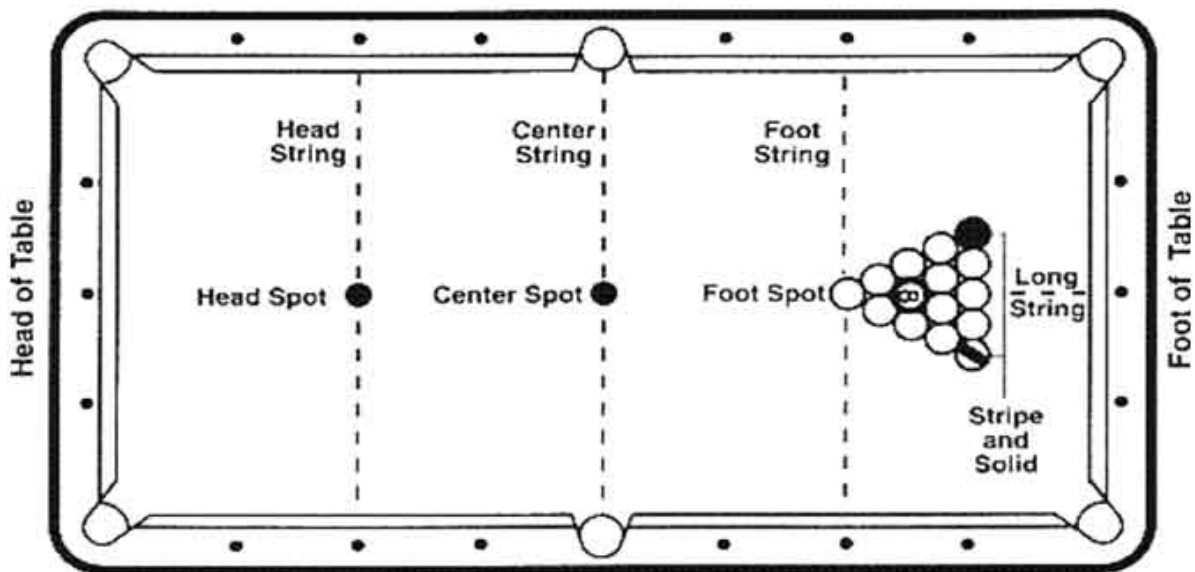


Figure 1 – Pool Table

3. REFEREES

- a. Each team will designate a referee prior to the start of each match. They must be identified to the opposing team captain or co-captain.
- b. It is each referee's responsibility to oversee the match to ensure rules of play are adhered to and identify infractions if/when they occur. **The Referees and 2/4 players involved in a match are the only persons allowed to make calls during a match. Teammates and spectators MAY NOT make calls.**
- c. Referees will not crowd the players when they are shooting.
- d. Referees shall respond to players' inquiries regarding rules. When asked for a rules clarification, referees will explain the applicable rule to the best of their ability; however, any misstatement or misinterpretation of a rule by the referee does not protect a player from enforcement of the actual rule(s) if an infraction occurs. The referee may not offer or provide an opinion that would affect play, such as whether a legal hit can be made on a prospective shot or whether a combination can be made. If the referees are unsure or can not agree on a rule then the Rules Ombudsman should be called.

4. LAG FOR BREAK

- a. Players will lag before each match to determine who breaks.
- b. Lags may be done from either end of the table with the balls in hand behind the head string, one player to the left and one to the right of the head spot. Balls are to be shot simultaneously to the foot cushion and back to the head end of the table.

c. The lagged ball must contact the foot cushion at least once and may hit the near rail. The player who leaves his/her ball closest to the near rail wins the lag and has the option of breaking or passing.

d. Loss of lag occurs when:

(1) The ball crosses completely into the opponent's half of the table;

(2) The ball fails to contact the foot cushion;

(3) The ball drops into a pocket;

(4) The ball jumps off the table;

(5) The ball touches the long cushion;

(6) The ball contacts the foot rail more than once

e. If both players violate automatic-loss lag rules, or if the referee is unable to determine which ball is closer, the lag will be replayed.

f. The person breaking will have a person from his/her team rack for them. A player may not rack for themselves.

5. THE RACK

The balls shall be racked in a triangle at the foot of the table with the 8-ball in the center of the triangle, the first ball of the rack on the foot spot, a stripe ball in one corner of the rack and a solid ball in the other corner (see Figure One for details).

6. THE BREAK SHOT

a. To execute a legal break shot, the breaker (when striking the cue ball from behind the head string) must either:

(1) Pocket a ball

(2) Drive a minimum of four balls out of the rack to the cushions. If a player fails to do this, his/her opponent can either play the balls as they lie, have the original player re-break, or claim the break and have one of their teammates re-rack.

b. If a player scratches on a legal break shot:

(1) It is a foul and the opponent gets ball-in-hand

(2) The table is considered "open"

(3) All balls pocketed remain pocketed; if the 8-ball was pocketed, it results in loss of game.

c. If a player causes any ball to jump off the table on the break shot, it is a foul and the incoming player receives ball-in-hand. If the ball that jumped off the table is other than the cue ball, it will be placed on the foot spot. If unable to place directly on the foot spot, it will be placed as close as possible to the foot spot going straight back. If the ball that jumped off the table is the 8-ball, it results in loss of game.

7. OPEN TABLE/CHOICE OF GROUP

a. The table is “open” when the choice of groups (solids or stripes) has not yet been determined by a legal pocketing of a ball. Any balls illegally pocketed during an open table will remain pocketed. If a player scratches when pocketing a ball on an open table, the table is still open.

b. During open table, combination shots involving balls of different groups are legal, such as hitting a strip into a solid to make the solid into a pocket. All that is required is to call the object ball and the pocket. After a group is established (solids or stripes), any such combinations will be a foul. The 8-ball may be part a combination if it is not the first ball contacted by the cue ball.

8. LEGAL SHOT

a. A legal shot requires the cue ball to be struck only with the cue tip. Failure to do so results in a foul.

b. Combination shots are allowed; the 8-ball can also be used to assist the shot. The 8-ball must not be the first ball struck by the cue ball.

c. Jump and masse shots are legal. To properly execute a jump shot, a player must shoot in a downward direction at a minimum 45 degree angle when striking the cue ball to cause it to jump. Otherwise, it will be considered a scoop or dig shot and will be called a foul.

NOTE: Match referees are responsible for determining if a jump shot was performed legally or not. While accidental miscuing (i.e., unintentionally striking the cue ball too low, causing it to jump) will not, in and of itself, be considered a foul, the referee will have final determination as to the legality of a jump shot and the intent of the player.

d. For each shot (except on the break), the player must identify which ball they intend to pocket and where (obvious shot need not be called – the 8 ball must always be called). For the purpose of these rules, the ball in question will be referred to as the “object” ball.

e. After the object ball has been identified, the player must first hit one of their balls (stripes or solids) and then either pocket the object ball in the designated pocket or cause any ball to hit a rail. Failure to pocket the object ball as intended will result in loss of turn. Failure to have a ball hit a rail is a foul and results in ball-in-hand.

f. Frozen Ball - If an object ball is in direct contact with a rail (or “frozen” on a rail), it must be pocketed or, after being struck by the cue ball, hit another rail OR have any other ball contact a rail. An object ball is not considered frozen unless it is announced as such by either a referee or one of the match players prior to the shot.

g. Split Hits - If the cue ball strikes a legal ball and a non-legal ball at approximately the same instant and it cannot be determined which ball was hit first, the judgment will go in favor of the player.

h. Playing the 8-ball - The 8-ball may be used to assist a shot provided the player first strikes one of their designated balls (stripes or solids) (i.e., using the 8-ball for a combination, carom, or kiss shot). If the 8-ball is pocketed on the break, it is a win, unless the cue ball scratches or jumps off the table. If this occurs, it is a loss of game.

i. Time Between Shots - A player must shoot a shot within two (2) minutes of the previous shot. Any teammate may advise a player how much time remains. If a player exceeds the two-minute time limit, it is considered a foul.

9. CALLED POCKET

a. Shots must be called, to include the object ball and intended pocket. Obvious shots do not need to be called. If the shot is not obvious to the opponent they may ask the shooter or referee prior to the shot being taken. **(The 8 ball pocket must always be called!)**

b. Any ball(s) pocketed on a foul remains pocketed, regardless of who they belong to.

c. A ball is considered pocketed if it drops off the table into a pocket and remains there.

d. A ball that rebounds from a pocket back onto the table bed is not a pocketed ball.

10. FOULS

a. The following is a list of fouls (not exclusive) that will result in a ball-in-hand anywhere on the table (unless otherwise mentioned):

(1) Scratches

(2) Hitting the 8-ball first when it is not the legal object ball

(3) Hitting one's opponent's ball first

(4) Inadvertent moving of any ball by a foreign object (i.e., hand, stick, clothing, etc.); any ball(s) moved as a result of a foul will not be returned to their original position(s)

(5) A player failing to shoot with at least one foot on the ground.

(6) A player shoots while the cue ball or any object ball is in motion (a spinning ball is considered to be in motion)

(7) When making a stroke, failure to make contact with any legal object ball first; playing the cue ball away from a ball directly touching it does not constitute having hit that ball (thus making for a legal shot)

(8) A double hit - A double hit foul consists of striking the cue ball twice with the same stroke. This shot must be obvious to be considered a foul. If it is not obvious, then it plays in favor of the shooter and is not a foul.

(9) A jumped ball - Balls may bounce on the cushion tops and rails of the table while in play without being jumped balls if they return to the table bed under their own power and without touching anything not considered part of the table. The table shall consist of all permanent parts of the table. Balls touching anything other than the table (i.e., light fixtures, chalk on the rails, persons standing near the table) while in play are considered jumped balls even if they return to the table bed and will result in loss of turn, unless it is the 8-ball, which will result in loss of game.

Any jumped ball(s) that does not return to the table bed will be spotted on, or as close as possible immediately behind the foot spot.

(10) During ball-in-hand placement, the player may use his/her hand or any part of his cue (including the tip) to position the cue ball.

(11) Exceeding the 2 minute time limit between shots.

b. The following is a list of fouls (not exclusive) that result in a loss of game:

(1) Fouls when pocketing the 8-ball

(2) Pockets the 8-ball out of turn or when not the legal object ball

(3) Jumps the 8-ball off the table at any time

(4) Pockets the 8-ball in a pocket not indicated

(5) Touches any moving cue ball after any shot, to include grabbing the cue ball from a pocket on a scratch shot.

(6) Scratching on a legally pocketed 8-ball

(7) Intentionally moving any ball without executing a legal shot as defined by Rule 9.

NOTE: All infractions must be called before the next shot is executed or else it will be deemed that no infraction occurred and play will continue.

12. STALEMATE - If at any time during a match neither player/team is able to make a legal shot without losing the game (such as a colored ball in contact with the 8-ball sitting on the lip of a pocket, and blocking the 8-ball or both refuse to take a legal shot that could give the opponent an opportunity to win), the game may be declared a stalemate if both referees agree. If this situation occurs, the game will be immediately replayed from the beginning (to include lagging for break).

13. DOUBLES

a. Doubles consists of two-person teams with both players alternating shots between turns.

b. The player who lags does not have to be the same person to break if the team wins the lag. The alternating shot sequence will begin with the break shot.

c. Doubles partners are allowed to consult each other throughout the entirety of the match. Either player may call the team's intended shot, to include the 8-ball shot.

- d. Neither player may act as referee when playing in a doubles match.
- e. It is the responsibility of the opposing team to keep track of which player last shot in order to ensure teams do not shoot out of turn.

14. TIME-OUTS AND ASSISTANCE TO PLAYERS

- a. A player is authorized two (2) time-outs per game. Each time-out will not exceed two minutes. No time-outs are allowed during a doubles match. Unused time-outs from one game may not be “rolled over” to another game.
- b. The two-minute time-out period begins when the player calls for a time-out; they have two minutes from that point to complete all assistance. During a timeout, teammates are permitted to leave the player’s immediate area and return to further assist if within the two-minute period.
- c. A player may call a time-out at any time when it is his/her shot. The Captain may suggest calling a time-out when it is their player’s shot; however, **only the player** can call the time-out. During a time-out, the entire match is considered in “time-out,” so the opponent may also consult with his/her team as well.
- d. Any number of teammates may assist a player during a time-out, to include the team’s designated referee for that match. e
- . No one is allowed to assist a player unless it is during a time-out. The first infraction will result in a warning. The second will result in loss of turn (no ball-in-hand). Any additional instance will result in loss of game.
- f. Only the player shooting (or his/her doubles partner) may touch the cue ball or the table felt. During a time-out, non-playing teammates may not touch the table felt when discussing shot options. The first instance will result in a warning; the second will result in loss of turn and ball-in-hand to the opponent.
- g. No one may mark the table to assist the player. This includes placing any visible mark(s) on the felt or table, placing chalk on the rail as an aiming point, etc. Marking the table for assistance will be considered a foul.
- h. When the player assumes a shooting stance, teammates shall cease instruction/coaching and leave the immediate area around the player.
- i. Rules Interpretation – A player may stop play at any time to ask the referee(s) for a rules clarification. This will not count against the player’s time-outs; however, during this rules clarification period, teammates may not offer advice to either player akin to a regular time-out. If so, it will be considered a foul in accordance with Rule 14.e.

15. MISCELLANEOUS

- a. A player may not use any pocketed ball or other foreign object to measure clearance for any given shot. For example, using a pocketed ball to determine if there is enough space between the rail and a ball in play to determine if another ball would make it through the opening would be a foul.

b. Once a ball has settled, if it shifts, turns or moves on its own, it shall remain where it settles and play continues. If a ball falls into a pocket after being immobile for more than five seconds, it will be replaced as close as possible to its position prior to falling in the pocket before play continues. If in the act of shooting, the object ball (as declared by the player) drops into a pocket "by itself" before the cue ball arrives at the dropped ball's original position, the cue ball and object ball shall be replaced to their original positions and the player may shoot again. Any other object balls disturbed on the stroke shall also be replaced to their original position(s) as much as possible before the shooter replays. If there is insufficient information to determine overall ball position, the players and referees may consider replaying the game.

c. Non-Player Interference - If any ball is inadvertently moved (or a player bumped such that play is directly affected) by a non-player during the match, the ball(s) shall be replaced as near as possible to their original positions prior to the incident, and play shall resume with no penalty on the player affected. Likewise, during the course of shooting, if a player is inadvertently bumped by a non-player and the resulting shot is directly affected, the ball(s) shall be replaced as near as possible to their original positions prior to the incident, and play shall resume with no penalty on the player affected. In all instances, the referees will return the balls to their original positions (not the players). This rule also applies to outside actions such as natural disasters or power failures and will be determined by the referees.