

7-Ball Rules

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Learn how to play 7 ball at the Billiards Forum and read the detailed set of [official 7 ball rules](#).

1. Basic Rules

The game of seven ball is a fast-paced billiards game that requires a lot of skill and perhaps a little bit of luck, like most games. With only seven balls being on a table there is little need for the game to go on for an extended period of time, making the game even more of a quick finish is the fact that six of the seven balls need not go in any particular pocket.

7 ball is a variation of 9 ball. It uses basically the same rules with 2 changes. One of the beauties of seven ball is that you can play it when you have two players of unequal skill. The player with less experience may have four possible pockets in which to hit the seven ball while the more experienced player may have only two possible holes. If you choose to play seven ball just for the speed of the game you can agree to be able to pocket the seven ball on any of the six holes. You'll find more details on 7 ball billiards rules below.

1. Each player only has 1 side of the table to pocket the 7 ball
2. A foul on the 7 ball is loss of game

2. Seven Ball Rack

The first step to having a successful and competitive game of seven ball is to rack the balls according to the rules. In seven ball billiards, the balls are to be placed in a circle with one ball being in front and two through six being counterclockwise from that spot. The seven ball is placed in the center of the circle and, when the breaking shot is made, it must legally pocket one ball or be re-racked for the opposing shooter to break.

Balls numbered 1 through 7 are racked in circular form, with the 1-ball at the head and the 7-ball in the middle. The sequence of all other objects balls is irrelevant. See the image of the 7-ball rack below. It is an image of racking up a game of seven-ball using a special hexagonal seven-ball rack, and incidentally also using a special 7 ball that borrows the black color and stripe, respectively, of the "money balls" in the games of eight-ball and nine-ball, to make it stand out more. The 1 ball is on the foot spot.

[View a diagram of a 7-ball rack](#)

3. Seven Ball Break

Players can either lag or flip for the break. A legal break occurs when an object ball is pocketed or at least four object balls contact a rail. The 1-ball must be contacted first. If this does not occur, the opponent can accept the table as is or request a re-rack and be awarded the break. If the 7-ball is pocketed on the break, and a foul does not occur, it is a win. If the 7-ball is made and a foul does occur, the 7-ball is spotted and the opponent has ball in hand throughout the table. All balls, with the exception of the 7-ball, remains pocketed.

In seven ball billiards, the balls have no point value and the object is to legally pocket the seven ball. However, after the opening shot, the two opposing shooters must choose a side of the table to attempt to shoot the seven ball into. So, either player is able to shoot balls one through six into any open pocket, but once the seven ball is left it must go into the pocket on the side that he/she declared after the opening break.

4. Seven Ball Push out

Immediately following the break, regardless of which player is shooting, a push out can occur. If the player does not feel confident with the location of the cue ball, they are allowed to shot it to a new location on the table. They are not

required to contact any object ball and no foul can be called, with the exception of a scratch. The player must notify their opponent that they are going to push out, else it will be considered a regular shot. After the push out, the opponent has the option to accept the cue ball where it lies or can make the player shot again. A push out can occur only once in a game and only on the shot immediately following the break.

5. Seven Ball Determining Side of Table

After the break, the non-breaking seven ball player picks a side of the table, where he/she is going to pocket the 7 ball. The breaking player has the opposite side of the table.

6. Seven Ball Legal shot

The player must contact the lowest numbered object ball first and either pocket any object ball or cause contact an object ball or the cue ball to contact a rail after initial contact. Object balls need to be called. If the seven ball is pocketed on the shooter's side of the table during a legal shot, it is a win. If the seven ball is pocketed on his/her opponent's side, it is spotted.

To recap, the shooter, on any shot except the final seven ball, must first contact the lowest numbered ball on the table before a shot is considered legal. However, if the opening shooter pockets the seven ball on the opening break, after first contacting the one ball, it IS enough to declare the opening shooter the winner of the game even though they had not declared a side of the table to pocket the ball yet.

7. Seven Ball – Frozen object ball

If an object ball is in direct contact with a rail, it is said to be frozen. The opponent is required to notify the shooter that a ball is frozen to a rail. If a player attempts to pocket a frozen ball, it is a foul unless they:

- make the ball, or any other object ball
- cause the frozen ball to contact a different rail, or
- cause the cue ball or any other object ball to contact a rail

8. Seven Ball – Pocketed Balls

Any object ball pocketed illegally will remain pocketed, with the exception of the 7-ball. If the 7-ball is illegally pocketed, it will be spotted.

9. 7 Ball – Object balls off the table

If a player causes any object ball to leave the playing area, it will be pocketed and the shot considered a foul.

10. Seven Ball – Jump shot

For a jump shot to be legal, the cue tip must strike the cue ball above center, forcing the cue ball into the table. Any contact below the cue ball, causing it to 'scoop' off the table, is a foul. Note that if a player is attempting to hit low on the cue ball during a regular shot (such as a draw shot) and unintentionally 'scoops' the cue ball, it is not a foul.

11. 7 Ball – Push Shot

A push shot occurs when the cue ball and an object ball are frozen together. If the player shoots (pushes) through the balls, it is considered a foul (this will be noticeable because the cue ball and object ball will travel down table at the same speed). To avoid a foul, the player is required to elevate their cue during the shot. It is the responsibility of the opponent to ask a third party to referee over the shot before it takes place; otherwise, a foul cannot be called.

12. Seven Ball - Double Hit shot

Similar to a push shot, with the exception that the cue ball and object ball are not frozen. Rather, they are very close together and the effect of a player shooting (pushing) through both balls is likely. All statements mentioned above regarding a push shot apply to a double hit.

13. 7 Ball – Foul

A shot will be considered a foul if a player

- Fails to make a legal shot
- Pockets the cue ball or sends it off the table
- Shots while not having contact with the floor
- causes a push shot
- causes a double hit
- performs an illegal jump shot

The penalty for all fouls is ball in hand for the opponent throughout the table.

Three consecutive fouls are loss of game. After the second foul, it is the responsibility of the other player to warn the fouling player that he/she is "on 2 fouls." If the fouling player is not warned, it is **not** loss of game. Then the foul count will be reset back to zero.