

## **8/19/08: Revised USBA 3-Cushion Rules:**

Old Rules as of March 2000:

### **UNITED STATES BILLIARD ASSOCIATION THREE-CUSHION RULES**

#### **Revised 9 March 2000**

1. USBA-sanctioned tournaments will be governed by the following rules. Any exception must be stated in the tournament notice, or discussed and approved by a majority of the players present before the start of any USBA tournament.
2. A three-cushion billiard is valid and is a count of one in any of the following cases: (1) the cue ball strikes the first object ball and then strikes three or more cushions before striking the second object ball; (2) the cue ball strikes three or more cushions and then strikes the two object balls; (3) the cue ball strikes a cushion, then strikes the first object ball, and then strikes two or more cushions before striking the second object ball; (4) the cue ball strikes two cushions, then strikes the first object ball, and then strikes one or more cushions before striking the second object ball.
3. A three-cushion count means three impacts. These impacts need not necessarily be on three different cushions to be considered a valid count. A valid count may be executed on one cushion or on two cushions if it is the result of the spin on the ball.
4. Lagging for the Break Position. (1) Each player selects a cue ball, which is placed on the table within the head string and the head rail, and then strokes the ball to the foot rail hard enough for it to return to the head rail. The balls in lagging may touch the side rails, though it is not required. If the two balls touch while being lagged, the player whose ball strayed across the center of the table will lose the lag. If a player's ball hits the red ball, or if the player's ball jumps the table, he will lose the lag. (2) The player whose ball comes to rest nearer to the head rail wins the lag. (3) The winner of the lag has the right to the break shot or to assign the break shot to the opponent. (4) The winner of the lag has the choice of cue balls, which is then used for the duration of the game.
5. Break Shot. (1) The opponent's ball is placed on the head spot. The player's cue ball is placed on a spot six inches (15.2 centimeters) to the right or left of the head spot. The red ball is placed on the foot spot. (2) The player executes the break shot by stroking his cue ball intending to contact the red ball first. Failure to contact the red ball first is a foul and the player's inning ends. (3) On subsequent shots either the red ball or the opponent's ball may be used as the first object ball.
6. Fouls That End a Player's Turn. (1) Jumped balls (Rule 11). (2) Starting play while balls are in motion. (3) Touching any of the balls with hand, with part of clothing, with cue or with any other object such as chalk or pen. The balls shall remain in position to which they were thus moved. (4) Push (shove) shot (Rule 14). (5) Double Stroke (Rule 14). (6) When, at moment of shooting, neither foot is touching the floor. (7) Wrong ball (Rule 8). (8) Touching ball with cue during warm-up (Rule 17). (9) Player interference (Rule 19).

7. Any foul caused by outside interference is not to be charged as a penalty to the player with shot in progress. If the balls are displaced by the disturbance, they will be restored to their original position as precisely as possible, and the player will continue shooting.

8. Wrong Ball. (1) Shooting with the wrong ball is a foul and ends the player's inning. (2) The opponent or the referee may call this foul; opponent may call before or after the shot, while referee may call it only after the shot is completed. (3) Such a foul can be called any time during a run, but the player shall be entitled to all points made before the stroke in which the foul was detected. (4) The incoming player shall play the balls as they lie after the foul was called.

9. Frozen Balls. (1) If during an inning, the player's ball comes to rest in contact with the opponent's ball, or comes to rest in contact with the red ball, the player has the option of playing away from the ball with which he is in contact, or electing to have the balls in contact spotted. (2) If an inning ends with the player's ball in contact with the next player's ball, or the red ball in contact with the next player's ball, the incoming player has the option of playing away from the ball in contact, or may elect to have the two balls that are in contact spotted. The loose or unfrozen ball is not to be touched. (3) The red ball is spotted on the foot spot, the player's cue ball on the head spot, and the opponent's cue ball on the center spot. (4) If the spot reserved for the ball to be spotted is hidden by another ball, the ball to be spotted is placed on the spot usually reserved for the hiding ball. (5) The same rules apply when a ball or balls jump the table.

10. When a cue ball is frozen to a cushion, a player may shoot into (play against) that cushion, but the first contact shall not count as a cushion impacted. Subsequent contacts with the same cushion are valid.

11. When a player's cue ball, the opponent's ball, or the red ball jumps the table, it is a foul and the player's inning ends. Spot balls by Rule 9 (3, 4).

12. When the cue ball bounces and rides the cushion of the rail and returns to the playing surface, the ball is in play. It shall count as one cushion contacted (impacted), regardless of the number of impacts contacted on that cushion. If the cue ball rides two or more rails, each rail will count as one cushion contacted. If the cue ball comes to rest on top of the cushion of the rail, it is considered a jumped ball, which is a foul, and the player's inning ends. If the cue ball or either of the other two balls touch the FRAME of the rail it is a foul and the player's inning ends. If the opponent's ball or the red ball bounces and rides the cushion of the rail without touching the frame of the rail these balls are also in play.

13. No shot shall be started while the balls are in motion, or are spinning. If a player disregards this rule, it is a foul and the player's inning ends.

14. If a player pushes (shoves) the cue ball, or if a player double strokes the cue ball with his cue, it is a foul and player's inning ends. (A push shot is one in which the cue tip remains in contact with the cue ball after cue ball strikes an object ball, or when cue tip again contacts the cue ball after cue ball strikes the object ball. Double stroke is similar and occurs when player's tip or cue shaft hits cue ball twice.) If a billiard is made, it shall not count, and the player's inning ends.

15. All kiss shots are fair, whether they deprive a player of an imminent score, or whether they help in a score.

16. Miscues shall not necessarily be considered a foul, unless it is construed that the player's ferrule or shaft touched the cue ball during the execution of the stroke, which is a foul, and the player's inning ends. Not all miscues are fouls, and if a billiard is scored because of a miscued stroke, it shall be counted and turn continues.

17. If a player during the "warm-up" stroking should touch the cue ball, it is a foul and the player's inning ends.

18. A game is official when a player scores the number of points designated as constituting a game, although the opponent has had one less turn at the table. If a referee and scorekeeper are used, the game becomes official after the score sheet is signed by the referee, the scorekeeper, and the players. The referee and the scorekeeper should also sign the sheet. Once the losing player signs the score sheet, no protest will be considered.

19. If a player at the table is responsible for interference in any manner, it is a foul, and the inning ends. The incoming player must accept the balls in position. A player not at the table must not distract the opponent with undue motions or noise. The referee or tournament official may issue a warning or disqualify the player for unsportsmanlike conduct.

20. If, for reasons beyond his control, a player cannot start a game as scheduled, the game may be postponed if the tournament director so decides. If a player is unable to finish a game, he forfeits the game, unless the opponent waives the forfeiture and agrees to finish the game at a time convenient to the tournament management. If a player is unable to return to the tournament, all his games are nullified.

21. If a player is disqualified while playing a game, he loses that game and gets no points. The opponent is credited with a game won and is given the number of points he would have scored had he won the game. If a player is disqualified from a tournament, all of his games are nullified (that is, the games played and the games remaining to be played). The tournament continues as though one less player started when tournament opened.

23. If, for reasons beyond his control, a player cannot start a game, he must notify the tournament manager in time to allow for a substitute player, or for another pair of players. All tournament contestants are subject to immediate call if a substitute is necessary.

24. If a referee is officiating and considers a player to be taking an abnormal amount of time between strokes with the intention of upsetting his opponent, the referee shall warn the player that he runs the risk of disqualification if he pursues these tactics. Continued disregard of the warning shall be proper grounds to disqualify the player. If no referee is officiating, the tournament manager shall have the right to invoke this rule.

25. Deliberate intentional safeties are not allowed, If played, it is a foul, and the player's inning ends. The incoming player may accept the balls as they lie, or set up the balls for a break shot.

26. At any tournament sanctioned by the USBA, the tournament director plus another member of the USBA who is not playing in the tournament shall constitute a grievance committee to whom unsportsmanlike conduct during the tournament may be reported. Before commencement of the tournament, the players shall designate two of the players to serve on such a committee to protect the interests of the players. The two persons representing the USBA and the two persons representing the players shall jointly consider any evidence or reports of unsportsmanlike conduct. If this grievance committee is unable to resolve the complaint, the USBA representatives shall submit a written report to the USBA for consideration by the Board of Directors. The two player representatives may also submit their views to the Board of Directors. At the next regular meeting or special meeting of the Board of Directors, these reports shall be considered and the action recommended by a majority shall be binding on the accused member of the USBA.

New Rules as of August 15, 2008:

## **UNITED STATES BILLIARD ASSOCIATION THREE-CUSHION RULES**

### **Revised 15 August 2008**

1. USBA-sanctioned tournaments will be governed by the following rules. Any exception must be stated in the tournament notice, or discussed and approved by a majority of the players present before the start of any USBA tournament.

2. A three-cushion billiard is valid and is a count of one when the cue ball has touched both of the object balls and has touched one or more cushions at least three times before striking the second object ball. The following illustrate this rule:

- (a) The cue ball strikes the first object ball and then strikes three or more cushions before striking the second object ball;
- (b) The cue ball strikes three or more cushions and then strikes the two object balls;
- (c) The cue ball strikes three or more cushions, then strikes the first object ball, then strikes one or more cushions and then strikes the second object ball;
- (d) The cue ball strikes a cushion, then strikes the first object ball, and then strikes two or more cushions before striking the second object ball;
- (e) The cue ball strikes two cushions, then strikes the first object ball, and then strikes one or more cushions before striking the second object ball.
- (f) A three-cushion count means three impacts. These impacts need not necessarily be on three different cushions to be considered a valid count. A valid count may be executed on one cushion or on two cushions if it is the result of the spin on the ball.

3. Lagging for the Break Position.

- (a) Each player selects a ball, which is placed on the table on the head string, and then strokes the ball to the foot rail. If a player's lag touches the side rails, that player loses the lag. If the two balls touch while being lagged, the player whose ball

strayed across the center of the table will lose the lag. If a player's ball hits the red ball, or if the player's ball jumps the table, he will lose the lag. If a player lags hard enough for his ball to strike the foot rail twice, that player loses the lag.

(b) The player whose ball comes to rest nearer to the head rail wins the lag.

(c) The winner of the lag has the right to the break shot or to assign the break shot to the opponent.

(d) The winner of the lag has the choice of cue balls, which is then used for the duration of the game.

#### 4. Break Shot.

(a) Spots shall be marked on the table according to UMB rules as shown in the PDF file: <http://www.usba.net/docs/pdf/3CushionTableMarkings3.pdf>

(b) The opponent's ball is placed on the head spot. The player's cue ball is placed on a spot 18.25 centimeters to the right or left of the head spot. The red ball is placed on the foot spot.

(c) The player executes the break shot by stroking the cue ball intending to contact the red ball first. Failure to contact the red ball first and directly is a foul and the player's inning ends.

(d) On subsequent shots either the red ball or the opponent's ball may be used as the first object ball.

#### 5. Fouls That End a Player's Turn.

(a) Touching any of the balls with hand, with part of clothing, with cue or with any other object such as chalk or pen. The balls shall remain in position to which they were thus moved.

(b) When, at moment of shooting, neither foot is touching the floor. The use of "special elevated shoes" is not permitted.

(c) Leaving a mark in place when the player shoots on any area of the playing surface, rails or frame in any manner that assists the player. A player is allowed to place chalk anywhere on the rail or frame so long as that placement does not remain to assist the player in executing the shot when the shot is stroked.

(d) Using anything other than a leather tip to contact the cue ball

(e) Causing the balls to move by any outside means, such as blowing on the balls or hitting or pushing the table. If the cue ball moves slightly when the player's hand is placed on the table to form a bridge when addressing the cue ball (usually because of loose cloth), then it is NOT a foul.

(f) Break shot foul (Rule 4).

(g) Wrong ball (Rule 7).

(h) Shooting off and moving a frozen ball (Rule 8).

(i) Shooting into a frozen cushion (Rule 9).

(j) Jumped balls (Rule 10).

(k) Cue ball touching frame (Rule 11).

(l) Starting play while balls are in motion (Rule 12).

(m) Push (shove) shot (Rule 13).

(n) Double stroke (Rule 13).

(o) Ferrule or shaft touching cue ball (Rule 15).

(p) Touching ball with cue during warm-up (Rule 16).

(q) Player interference (Rule 18).

(r) Intentional safety (Rule 23).

6. Any foul caused by outside interference is not to be charged as a penalty to the player with shot in progress. If the balls are displaced by the disturbance, they will

be restored to their original position as precisely as possible, and the player will continue shooting.

#### 7. Wrong Ball.

- (a) Shooting with the wrong ball is a foul and ends the player's inning.
- (b) The opponent, the referee or the shooting player may call this foul; foul may be called anytime after the stroke is completed and before the next shot is stroked.
- (c) Such a foul can be called any time during a run, but the player shall be entitled to all points made before the stroke in which the foul was detected.
- (d) The incoming player shall play the balls as they lie after the foul was called.

#### 8. Frozen Balls.

- (a) If during an inning, the player's ball comes to rest in contact with the opponent's ball, or comes to rest in contact with the red ball, the player has the option of playing away from the ball with which the player's ball is in contact, or electing to have the balls in contact spotted. The loose or unfrozen ball is not to be touched.
- (b) If an inning ends with the incoming player's ball in contact with the opponent's ball or the red ball, the incoming player has the option of playing away from the ball in contact, or may elect to have the two balls that are in contact spotted. The loose or unfrozen ball is not to be touched.
- (c) The red ball is spotted on the foot spot, the player's cue ball on the head spot, and the opponent's cue ball on the center spot.
- (d) If the spot reserved for the ball to be spotted is hidden by another ball, the ball to be spotted is placed on the spot usually reserved for the hiding ball.
- (e) The same rules apply when a ball or balls jump the table.
- (f) The player may elect to bank his frozen cue ball into a rail first and then contact the other frozen ball. The other frozen ball may not be moved as a result of the player's stroke (a foul), but it is allowed to move slightly as a result of losing the support it may have had from being frozen to the cue ball.
- (g) The player may elect to masse his frozen cue ball away from the other frozen ball and then back into the other frozen ball. The other frozen ball may not be moved as a result of the player's stroke (a foul), but it is allowed to move slightly as a result of losing the support it may have had from being frozen to the cue ball.

9. When a cue ball is frozen to a cushion, a player may not shoot into (play against) that cushion, and it is a foul to do so. A player may, however, masse away from the frozen cushion and then contact the same cushion one or more times.

10. When a player's cue ball, the opponent's ball, or the red ball jumps the table, it is a foul and the player's inning ends. Spot balls by Rule 8 (c, d).

11. When the cue ball bounces and rides the cushion of the rail and returns to the playing surface, the ball is in play. It shall count as one cushion contacted (impacted), regardless of the number of impacts contacted on that cushion. If the cue ball rides two or more rails, each rail will count as one cushion contacted. If the cue ball comes to rest on top of the cushion of the rail, it is considered a jumped ball, which is a foul, and the player's inning ends. If the cue ball or either of the other two balls touches the FRAME of the rail it is a foul and the player's inning ends. If the opponent's ball or the red ball bounces and rides the cushion of the rail without touching the frame of the rail these balls are also in play.

12. No shot shall be started while the balls are in motion, or are spinning. If a player disregards this rule, it is a foul and the player's inning ends.

13. If a player pushes (shoves) the cue ball, or if a player double strokes the cue ball with his cue, it is a foul and player's inning ends. (A push shot is one in which the cue tip remains in contact with the cue ball after cue ball strikes an object ball, or when cue tip again contacts the cue ball after cue ball strikes the object ball. Double stroke is similar and occurs when player's tip or cue shaft hits cue ball twice.) If a billiard is made, it shall not count, and the player's inning ends.

14. All kiss shots are fair, whether they deprive a player of an imminent score, or whether they help in a score.

15. Miscues are not a foul unless the player's ferrule or shaft touches the cue ball during the execution of the stroke. If a billiard is scored because of a miscued stroke, it shall be counted and turn continues (unless the miscue was a foul).

16. If a player during the "warm-up" stroking should touch the cue ball, it is a foul and the player's inning ends.

17. A game is official when a player scores the number of points designated as constituting a game, although the opponent may have had one less turn at the table. If a referee and scorekeeper are used, the game becomes official after the score sheet is signed by the referee, the scorekeeper, and the players. The referee and the scorekeeper should also sign the sheet. Once the losing player signs the score sheet, no protest will be considered.

18. If a player at the table is responsible for interference in any manner, it is a foul, and the inning ends. The incoming player must accept the balls in position. A player not at the table must not distract the opponent with undue motions or noise. The referee or tournament official may issue a warning or disqualify the player for unsportsmanlike conduct.

19. If, for reasons beyond the player's control, a player cannot start a game as scheduled, the game may be postponed if the tournament director so decides. If a player is unable to finish a game, the player forfeits the game, unless the Tournament Director waives the forfeiture and decides to reschedule the game at a time convenient to the tournament management. If a player is unable to return to the tournament, all the player's games are nullified (that is, the games played and games remaining to be played).

20. If a player is disqualified while playing a game, the player loses that game and gets no points. The opponent is credited with a game won and is given the number of points the opponent would have scored had the opponent won the game. If a player is disqualified from a tournament, all of the player's games are nullified (that is, the games played and the games remaining to be played). The tournament continues as though one less player started when tournament opened.

21. USBA Tournaments, in general, do not allow player or team substitutes. However, if the tournament director makes an exception and does allow substitutes, and if, for reasons beyond the player's control, a player cannot start the match, the

player must notify the tournament director in time to allow for a substitute player, or for another pair of players. All tournament contestants are subject to immediate call if a substitute is necessary.

22. If a referee is officiating and considers a player to be taking an abnormal amount of time between strokes with the intention of upsetting his opponent, the referee shall warn the player that the player runs the risk of disqualification if the player continues these tactics. Disregard of the warning shall be proper grounds to disqualify the player. If no referee is officiating, the tournament director shall have the right to invoke this rule.

23. An intentional safety is not allowed. If played, it is a foul, and the player's inning ends. The incoming player may accept the balls as they lie, or set up the balls for a break shot. If there was a possibility of scoring on the shot, there is no foul. During a USBA tournament, in the absence of a referee, the Tournament Director may make this determination.

24. At any tournament sanctioned by the USBA, the tournament director plus another member of the USBA who is not playing in the tournament shall constitute two members of a four person grievance committee to whom unsportsmanlike conduct during the tournament may be reported. Before commencement of the tournament, the players shall designate two of the players to serve on such a committee to protect the interests of the players. The two persons representing the USBA and the two persons representing the players shall jointly consider any evidence or reports of unsportsmanlike conduct. If this grievance committee is unable to resolve the complaint, the USBA representatives shall submit a written report to the USBA for consideration by the USBA Board of Directors. The two player representatives may also submit their views to the USBA Board of Directors. These reports shall be considered and the action recommended by a majority of the USBA Board of Directors shall be binding on the accused member of the USBA.