

M8 Pool Leagues

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Printed 9-9-09

GAME RULES

1. MATCH START: The two captains flip a coin. The winner of the coin flip will either choose to put a member of their team up and let their opponent respond with a player or require the opposing team to put up one of its members first and respond with a player. This order of choice reverses for each set, so that one team must choose first for the 1st, 3rd and 5th sets of the match and the other team chooses first in the 2nd and 4th sets. The first team to place a player at the table for the set has the right to change their mind until the second player has been chosen and the first team informed.

2. THE LAG: As soon as both teams have chosen the players for a set, the players will lag for the opening break. Rules affecting the lag are:

- a) Players lag simultaneously.
- b) One player lags to the left of the center string, the other lags to the right. If a player causes their ball to cross the center string and contact the opponent's ball, they have lost the lag.
- c) The lagged ball can only contact the rails at the foot and the head of the table. Any contact with a side rail or the jaws of a pocket is a loss of the lag. A scratch is also a loss.
- d) The ball coming to rest closest to the head rail wins the lag. It makes no difference whether or not that ball makes contact with the head rail.

3. THE RACK: There are 3 requirements for an acceptable rack:

- a) The 8-ball must be in the center of the third row.
- b) The first ball of the rack must be centered on the foot spot.
- c) The balls must be racked tight.
- d) If any of these conditions are not satisfied, the breaker has the right to have the balls racked again.

NOTES:

- 1) The condition of the felt often makes it impossible to perfectly satisfy rules b and c. In this case, accept the best rack possible.
- 2) The breaker's opponent normally racks the balls, but the opponent may designate anyone they wish to rack.

4. THE BREAK: The first game of a set is broken by the winner of the lag. All other games are broken by the winner of the previous game. The breaker must satisfy four requirements:

- a) The cue ball must be stroked from within the kitchen.
- b) The first object ball contacted by the cue ball must be in one of the first three rows.
- c) At least four balls from the rack must make contact with a rail. If an object ball is pocketed on the break, this rule does not apply.
- d) The break must be a HARD stroke. Intentional soft breaking is not allowed, even if four balls have contacted a rail. Intentional soft breaking is a violation of sportsmanship rules.

NOTES:

- 1) If the cue ball has been placed outside the kitchen prior to the break, the opponent must warn the breaker (see REQUIRED WARNINGS section).
- 2) Failure to comply with rules b, c or d is not considered a legal break. The balls are racked again and the same player is allowed to break

again. If the shooter has also committed a break foul, the balls are racked again and the opponent has the break (see FOULS section).

3) The cue ball does not count as one of the four balls to contact a rail. It's also not required for the cue ball to contact a rail.

5. RESULTS OF THE BREAK: The break shot is a unique stroke. Several possibilities exist:

a) Break Foul: If a foul has been committed, the following results do not apply (see FOULS section).

b) Break not legal: (see THE BREAK section).

c) No Balls Pocketed: It is the opponent's turn and he/she has an open table.

d) One Group of Balls Pocketed:

ALL formats: The breaker's turn continues with an open table.

e) Both Groups of Balls Pocketed: The breaker's turn continues with an open table. The number of balls pocketed on the break does not affect the results; it is the TYPE of balls pocketed that determines the outcome. As an example, if the breaker pockets one solid and two stripes, they still have an open table and may choose solids.

f) 8-Ball is Pocketed: The breaker wins the game. If the cue ball is also pocketed or is a jumped ball, the breaker has committed a game ending foul (see FOULS section). Although unlikely, it's possible for the breaker to prefer to have the 8-ball spotted instead of accepting the game win. If this is done, it is the breaker's responsibility to retrieve the 8-ball. The breaker's inning will then continue with all other balls left as they came to rest and the table is open.

6. LEGAL STROKE: On every stroke after the break shot, the shooter must satisfy two rules in order to execute a legal stroke:

a) The first ball contacted by the cue ball must be one of that shooter's group of balls. Any rails contacted by the cue ball BEFORE the initial contact with an object ball do not count. The shooter must still drive a ball to a rail or pocket a ball after the contact.

b) After that initial contact, a ball must contact a rail or fall into a pocket. It doesn't have to be the first object ball struck or the cue ball.

NOTE: The stroke is not a legal shot if some other form of foul is committed on the stroke, even if rules a and b have been satisfied.

7. OPEN TABLE: The table remains open until only one group of balls has been pocketed on a legal stroke. With an open table, the shooter may strike any object ball first to pocket any other ball. Any mixture of combination shots may be used if the table is open. The only exception to this is that the 8-ball cannot be the first ball contacted. The 8-ball is not "neutral". The 8-ball can legally be used at any time in a combination shot as long as it's not the first ball struck by the cue ball.

NOTES:

a) The table remains open if a foul has been committed on that stroke.

b) In the OPEN format the table remains open if both groups of balls are pocketed, even if one group was the intended object ball and the other group was pocketed accidentally. In the ADVANCED and MASTERS formats, if a player legally pockets a called ball, that player is then shooting at that group of balls for the rest of the game, even if both types of balls were pocketed on the called shot.

8. FOLLOWING STROKES: The player continues shooting until they have failed to pocket one of their group of balls or have committed a foul. Each player attempts to pocket each of their group of balls until all have been pocketed. In the Advanced and Masters formats, all shots are “call-pocket”. The object ball must fall in the intended pocket for the shooter’s turn to continue. There is no requirement to call the rails to be contacted or to call caroms with other balls. Since most shots are obvious before the stroke, it’s not necessary to verbally or physically indicate the desired pocket unless the shot is ambiguous or the opponent asks the shooter. If the opponent is unsure of the intended shot, it’s their responsibility to ask the shooter before the stroke is made.

NOTES:

- a) If a player intends to play a safety, they should tell their opponent that they are about to play a safety.
- b) In the OPEN format if the shooter calls a safety and either intentionally or accidentally pockets one of their group of balls without committing a foul, they must continue shooting. In the ADVANCED and MASTERS formats, the shooter’s turn is over after shooting a safety, even if a ball is pocketed.

9. WINNING THE GAME: There are three ways to win the game:

- a) The shooter pockets the 8-ball on the break shot.
- b) The opponent commits a game ending foul (see FOULS section).
- c) After all of their group has been pocketed, the shooter pockets the 8-ball in a properly marked pocket on a separate legal stroke. It is not allowed for a player to pocket their last object ball and the 8-ball on the same stroke.

10. THE POCKET PATCH: The 8-ball must be called. This is done by placing the pocket patch on the rail nearest to that pocket. There is no need to call rails, "kisses", etc.

Rules affecting the pocket patch are:

- a) The patch must be nearest to the called pocket than any other pocket. The distance from the pocket does not matter. If the patch happens to be nearest the intended pocket before the shooter's turn, they do not have to touch or move it.
- b) There must be no more than one patch on the table.
- c) Anyone present may remind the shooter to "patch the pocket". Any attempt to tell the shooter WHERE to place the patch is an act of coaching and is controlled by coaching rules (see COACHING section).
- d) The patch must not hang over the rail or pocket into the area of play. However, the opponent is required to warn the shooter.
- e) Although the league supplies an official M8 pocket patch, any object can be used as the patch IF both players have previously agreed.

11. FOULS: There are three types of fouls. If more than one type of foul is committed on the same stroke, the higher penalty applies. Any foul must be called before another stroke is taken. An attempt to avoid the penalty for a foul by hurrying the following stroke is an act of bad sportsmanship and is forbidden.

a) **BREAK FOUL** (on break stroke only) the penalty is ball-in-kitchen:

- 1) The cue ball is scratched.
- 2) The cue ball is a jumped ball.
- 3) The shooter interferes with the travel of the cue ball when the cue ball could possibly scratch. This rule requires some level of judgment.

It is not a foul if the speed and direction of the cue ball before interference could not be reasonably considered to be able to fall in a pocket. ("Benefit of doubt" goes against the shooter.)

b) BALL-IN-HAND FOUL (on any stroke following the break) the penalty is ball-in-hand:

- 1)** The cue ball fails to make its first contact with the shooter's object ball.
- 2)** No ball contacts a rail or falls in a pocket after the first contact between the cue ball and object ball.
- 3)** The cue ball is scratched or a jumped ball.
- 4)** The cue tip contacts the cue ball more than once on the same stroke. (See the 45 Degree Rule in REQUIRED WARNINGS section).
- 6)** A push shot is committed. Illegal jump shots are a form of push shot (see Jump Shots in SPECIAL GAME RULES section).
- 7)** An object ball is accidentally moved during the stroke and then makes contact with the cue ball or has been moved from a spot that the cue ball passes through.
- 8)** The shooter allows ANY item (their hand, hair, sleeve, piece of chalk, etc.) to contact the cue ball at any time. There are two exceptions: The game isn't "live" until a stroke is executed on a shot involving the kitchen. It is not a foul if the cue ball is contacted prior to the break stroke or the stroke following a break foul. If the shooter has a ball-in-hand, they may adjust the position of the cue ball with their hand or cue, as long as a "forward stroking motion" is not used. If the shooter causes the cue ball to make contact with any other ball while placing it, they have committed a foul.
- 9)** The shooter strokes while a ball is still in motion. A spinning ball is in motion.

10) The shooter ignores an opponent's call for a referee (see COACHING section) or an opponent's warning (see REQUIRED WARNINGS section).

11) The shooter clearly takes a ball-in-hand shot when they were only entitled to ball-in-kitchen (see REQUIRED WARNINGS section).

12) The shooter causes the cue ball or 8-ball to make contact with the pocket patch after being warned (see REQUIRED WARNINGS section).

13) The shooter strokes without at least one foot on the floor while a bridge is available and after having been warned (see REQUIRED WARNINGS section).

14) The shooter's team has violated coaching rules (see COACHING section).

15) In some uncommon situations, the shooter may feel that they are in a position where they can only worsen their chances by taking a stroke. In this case, the shooter has the right to pick up the cue ball and hand it to their opponent. This is to be scored as a safety by the shooter. The opponent then receives a ball-in-hand.

NOTE: Although you are not required to call foul before taking a ball in hand, PROTECT YOURSELF. You should call the foul and get an acknowledgement from your opponent before picking up the cue ball. If a player has picked up the cue ball and cannot establish that a foul was committed by their opponent, they have themselves committed a ball in hand foul.

c) GAME-ENDING FOULS (on any stroke) - The normal penalty for any of the fouls listed below is loss of game. However, ALL game-ending fouls provide the opponent with a choice. Whenever a shooter has committed a game-ending foul, their opponent may choose to take

a ball-in-hand penalty instead of the game win. If the shooter has pocketed the 8-ball and their opponent has chosen this ball-in-hand option, it's the shooter's responsibility to retrieve the 8-ball and the 8-ball is spotted. If the 8-ball has been pocketed in some other way than the result of a stroke (player's body, interference with the shot, sweep of the cue stick, etc.), it is placed by the opponent as near as possible to its original position. **IF YOU'VE COMMITTED A GAME-ENDING FOUL, DON'T TOUCH ANY BALL UNTIL YOUR OPPONENT ACCEPTS THE GAME WIN!** A shooter should either wait for their opponent to choose or ask the opponent for their choice. If the shooter has moved any balls, every reasonable attempt should be made to return those balls to their original position. Just as in the case of an accidentally moved ball, the opponent controls the placement. In cases where it is impossible to reconstruct the table (and ONLY then), the shooter will receive one point for each of their group of balls which were already pocketed and their opponent will receive a 14 point game win. Players who have this ball-in-hand option are expected to make their own decision. Advice from a teammate is an act of coaching. The coach may provide advice if there is a time-out available, but if a teammate who isn't the coach provides advice OR the coach provides advice when there isn't a time-out available, the player loses this option and MUST accept the game win. If a player exercises this ball-in-hand option and takes a stroke, the game is "live". Game-ending fouls are:

- 1) The 8-ball is a "jumped ball".**
- 2) On a stroke following the break, the 8-ball is pocketed before all of the shooter's group of balls have been pocketed ("8 out of turn").**

(There is one possible exception to this - see Accidentally Shooting the Wrong Group of Balls in SPECIAL GAME RULES section).

- 3) The 8-ball is pocketed on the same stroke that pockets the shooter's last object ball.
- 4) The cue ball is scratched or is a "jumped ball" while the shooter's object ball is the 8-ball.
- 5) The cue ball is scratched or is a "jumped ball" on a break stroke that also pockets the 8-ball.
- 6) The shooter commits any type of ball-in-hand foul during a stroke in which the 8-ball is pocketed.
- 7) The shooter interferes with any ball that then causes or allows the 8-ball to be pocketed.
- 8) The shooter interferes with the cue ball or the 8-ball in a game losing situation.
- 9) The 8-ball has been pocketed in violation of the rules listed in THE POCKET PATCH.

NOTE: It is NOT a game-ending foul if the shooter merely fails to execute a legal stroke while they are shooting at the 8-ball (hitting another ball first, failing to drive a ball to a rail, etc.). Unless some other form of game ending foul has also been committed, this is a ball-in-hand foul.

12. SPECIAL GAME RULES

a) **Accidentally Moved Object Balls:** Accidental movement of object balls is not a foul. If the object ball is moved prior to the stroke, the shooter must stop and allow their opponent the option of returning the balls to their original position or to accept the resting position of the moved balls. If more than one ball is moved, the opponent must either return all moved balls or accept the resting position of all balls. If the accidental movement is caused during or after the stroke, all balls must

be allowed to come to rest without interference. After this, the opponent has the same option described above.

NOTES:

- 1)** It is not an automatic foul if the shooter attempts to return an accidentally moved ball. The important issue is that the opponent controls the replacement or acceptance of the moved ball. If the shooter has replaced the ball, the opponent can accept that, replace it him/herself, or place it back to the moved position.
- 2)** The opponent DOES NOT have the right to place the ball anywhere they wish. They must make an honest attempt to place it in the position it had actually occupied.
- 3)** It sometimes happens that so many balls have been moved that it is impossible to return them to their original position. In this case, the opponent has the choice of accepting the moved position or calling for a re-rack of the balls. A re-rack is handled as described in Stalemated Games.

b) Accidentally Pocketed Ball: An accidentally pocketed ball is one that the shooter has caused to fall into a pocket by some other action than a stroke. If this ball is the cue ball, it is treated the same as if it had been pocketed on a stroke (see FOULS section). If this ball is the 8-ball, it is a game-ending foul. If this is one of the other object balls, it is treated as an accidentally moved ball. If the opponent chooses to have this ball replaced to its original position, it is the shooter's responsibility to retrieve the ball.

c) Hanging Ball: If a ball comes to a complete rest at the edge of a pocket for at least three seconds, it is a hanging ball. If this ball later falls into the pocket for no apparent reason, it is not considered pocketed. It is to be replaced as near as possible to its original position. If both players agree, the ball may be left as pocketed.

d) Jumped Ball (on the floor): Rules covering the cue ball or 8-ball coming to rest out of play are listed in the FOULS section. Causing another object ball to be a "jumped ball" is not a foul. Any "jumped ball" other than the cue ball or 8-ball is spotted on the rack spot before the following stroke. If there is more than one "jumped ball", the opponent chooses which is to be spotted first. If the shooter has otherwise executed a legal shot and pocketed one of their group of balls, they continue to shoot.

e) Jump Shots: There are legal and illegal jump shots. A jump shot executed with a level or nearly level cue stick aimed at a low spot on the cue ball is a form of push shot and is a foul. A jump shot executed by a downward stroke aimed near to a line passing through the center of the cue ball is a legal stroke. If the location of play has a "house rule" against jump shots, this type of shot is not allowed.

f) Masse Shots: Masse shots are legal by league rules, but many locations have "house rules" against masse shots. They are not allowed in these locations.

g) Stalemated Games: It will rarely occur that neither player chooses to attempt to execute a legal stroke. If each player commits two consecutive intentional fouls (a total of four consecutive foul strokes), the game is stalemated. Upon a stalemated game, the balls are re-racked, no points are scored, all innings from the game are crossed off the score sheet, and the same player that originally broke the rack breaks again.

h) Accidentally Shooting the Wrong Group of Balls: Occasionally, the shooter will mistakenly start shooting at the opponent's group of balls. This is obviously a ball-in-hand foul on the first such stroke taken. However, if the opponent does not call the foul and instead allows the shooter to continue, the opponent loses the right to call fouls

for this violation. After the shooter strokes at two or more of the opponent's object balls, the opponent can only inform the shooter of this and choose one of these options:

1) The shooter must return to his/her own group of balls. If they have pocketed an object ball without committing some other type of foul, their inning continues.

2) The game is re-racked as described in Stalemated Games.

NOTE: If the opponent has allowed the shooter to pocket all of the wrong group of balls and otherwise legally pocket the 8-ball, the shooter has won the game. The shooter will receive credit for the game win and any of their correct group of balls pocketed, but will not receive credit for any other balls remaining on the table. The opponent will receive credit (7 points) for their correct group of balls.

i) Legal Cue Ball: If the cue ball provided for the match does not satisfy the definition given here, either team has the right to substitute a cue ball which is legal. Once a set has begun, no cue ball substitution can be made until that set has finished. Once a legal cue ball is substituted, it will remain in use for the rest of the set. The requirements of a legal cue ball are:

1) The cue ball must be returnable by the table if pocketed.

2) The cue ball must be the same diameter as the object balls.

3) The cue ball must be spherically balanced.

4) A composition type cue ball ("mud ball" or "mush ball") is NOT a legal cue ball. This ball has small metal flakes distributed throughout its volume and can be identified by examining its surface.

j) Jammed Balls: It is possible for two or more balls to become clustered in the jaws of a pocket in such a way that one or more of these balls would fall into the pocket if the other balls were not

preventing this. Any ball that both players agree would otherwise fall into the pocket should be placed in the pocket before the next stroke.

k) Interference with Stroke: It sometimes happens that another person accidentally strikes the shooter's cue stick while they are preparing to stroke. This may then cause the cue stick to contact the cue ball. The outcome depends on WHO that other person is:

1) The person causing the interference is a member of the shooter's team or is a spectator clearly present with that team. The contact with the cue ball is considered a stroke. (Rules in LEGAL STROKE and FOULS sections apply.)

2) The person causing the interference is a member of the opposing team or a spectator unconnected to the shooter's team - No stroke has been made. The balls are returned to their positions before the interference and the shooter then continues ("no harm, no foul").

l) Final Position of Balls: The outcome of a stroke is determined by the position of the balls AFTER motion has stopped. If a ball goes into a pocket and is "spit out" onto the table, it has not been pocketed. If a ball jumps off the table and returns to rest on the table bed after striking the pool table light or a piece of chalk, it is not a "jumped ball". There are several variations to this, but the basic meaning of the rule is that a ball is considered to be where it STOPS, not where it has been. The only exception to this is a case where that ball has been contacted by the shooter's body or an object held by the shooter. In this exception, the ball is considered to be a "jumped ball".

13. REQUIRED WARNINGS: Some situations require a warning by the opponent BEFORE the stroke is executed. In most of these, a foul can't be called for this violation unless the warning was given. Any member of the opposing team is allowed to give the required warning.

a) 45 Degree Rule: The 45 degree rule is provided to allow teams to have an easily defined way of executing a legal hit on object balls that are very close to the cue ball. When the cue ball and the first object ball to be contacted are within a distance equal to the diameter of the ferrule of the shooter's cue stick (approximately 1/2 inch) or closer, the cue stick must be stroked from an angle of 45 degrees or more from the line of centers between the cue ball and the object ball (either vertically or horizontally). If uncertain, the shooter has the right to ask the opponent before stroking to verify that they have satisfied this requirement. If the opponent does not verbally warn the shooter that he/she is not satisfying the "45 degree rule", it is assumed that he/she did satisfy the rule.

b) Split Hit ("bad hit"): The opponent should protect themselves by warning the shooter to wait until both teams can agree on a referee or referees to watch the shot and call the "hit" legal or foul. The decision of the referee is final. Although a foul may be called after the stroke if a warning was not made, "benefit of doubt" will rule in favor of the shooter. A shooter who ignores a proper warning and strokes without waiting for an agreed referee has committed a ball-in-hand foul.

c) Object Ball Frozen to Rail: If an object ball is frozen to a rail, the contact of that ball to that rail cannot be considered to satisfy the requirements of a legal shot. No ball is considered as frozen to the rail unless it has been identified and agreed to be frozen BEFORE the stroke. If this object ball is the first ball contacted, one of the following must occur or a foul has been committed: The object ball later contacts any other rail, or the cue ball later contacts any rail, or a different object ball contacts a rail or any ball is pocketed.

d) Cue Ball Out of the Kitchen: The kitchen exists on two strokes only - the break shot and the shot following a break foul. On these

strokes, the cue ball must be stroked from a position inside the kitchen and its first contact must be with an object ball or rail outside of the kitchen. A ball is determined to be "in" or "out" by the point at which the centerline of that ball contacts the table. A foul can only be called for violating this requirement if it is absolutely clear to all parties that the violation occurred. Therefore, a warning is recommended.

e) Pocket Patch Overhanging Into Playing Area: No foul can be called for any ball contacting the patch unless a warning was given by the opponent and ignored by the shooter.

f) One Foot on the Floor: It is a foul to stroke without at least one of the shooter's feet in contact with the floor. The exception to this is that a bridge must be available at the location or the rule doesn't apply. No foul can be called for this violation unless the shooter was warned prior to the stroke.

g) Coaching Violations: Some coaching fouls can only be called after a proper warning. See the COACHING section for details.

COACHING

One of the major purposes of M8 is to teach pool playing skills to its less experienced members. Because of this, the right to coach players is essential. This section will explain the rules both allowing and restricting coaching.

1. DEFINITION OF COACHING: Coaching consists of providing advice to the shooter about what to shoot, how to shoot it, or calling fouls on the player's behalf. Requests for rule interpretations are not coaching ONLY IF that request is initiated by the player and that player has no private conversation with a teammate.

2. CHOOSING THE COACH: Each player has the right to choose their own coach at the beginning of the set.

3. CHANGING THE COACH: Once the player has chosen their coach, they are not allowed to change coaches. There is only **one** exception to this rule. If a match is being played on two tables and the coach is called to play on the other table, they are not allowed to continue coaching. The player then must choose another coach.

4. RESTRICTIONS ON THE COACH:

- a) The coach must be a member of the team and on the roster.
- b) No one can perform coaching duties unless selected as the coach.
- c) If the coach has to leave the match for any reason, the player must complete the set without a coach, unless the opponent agrees to a change in coaches.

- d) The coach cannot interrupt play because they have to temporarily leave the match. Play continues in their absence.
- e) Only the coach can provide direct advice to the player, but the coach can confer with other team members as long as the shooter is separated and cannot hear the discussion, but the overall coaching time limit remains one minute.
- f) The coach cannot touch any ball. The first violation requires a verbal warning by the opponent. Each subsequent violation for the rest of the set is a ball-in-hand foul.
- g) The coach cannot leave any marks on the table.
- h) The coach must leave the table before the shot. The coach cannot stand in the shooter's "line of sight".
- i) Non coaches cannot directly provide advice to the shooter or call out fouls. Teams are responsible for the actions and statements of non members who are in their company.

5. WHEN COACHING IS IN EFFECT: Calling fouls on the player's behalf AT ANY TIME is coaching. Players are allowed to talk to their teammates and discuss strategy between games and during the opponent's turn, but coaching is assumed if they continue to talk after the opponent's turn has ended (balls have stopped rolling).

6. COACHING PERIOD: The time length of a coaching period should be kept to one minute or less. This is a guideline. The issue here is the pace of play. If an occasional coaching period is longer than one minute, there is no problem. If a coach or team is habitually taking longer than a minute, they are violating the rules of league sportsmanship. The coaching period begins soon as the advice is started or the foul is called. The coaching period ends when the player

takes the following stroke. After calling foul for the player, the coach is allowed to advise them on their shot. The coach can leave the table and return as long as no stroke has been made and time is not excessive.

7. LIMIT OF COACHING ALLOWED: In the OPEN format players rated 30-50 and non rated players are allowed two coaching periods per game. Players rated 51-100 are allowed one coaching period per game. In the ADVANCED format all players are allowed one coaching period per game. In the MASTERS format no coaching is allowed. Any coaching given to a player that has already received this maximum limit is an automatic ball-in-hand foul.

8. TIME OUTS: A time-out is an interruption of play. Before any interruption, you are heavily encouraged to inform your opponent that you want a time-out and wait for an acknowledgement from them. This will help to avoid confusion and arguments. It will also help to avoid unnecessary fouls. There are four acceptable reasons for calling a time-out:

a) Time-out for a referee: Any player may call for a referee to watch the shot. This is NOT coaching. That referee will then call the shot as a legal stroke or a foul. Their call is final.

b) Time-out for a rules call: Only the shooter or their coach can interrupt play for a rule interpretation. If this is initiated by the coach, it IS coaching. If it is initiated by the shooter and the shooter has any private conversation with their coach, it IS coaching. If it is initiated by the shooter and a member of the opposing team is present to hear everything said, it is NOT coaching.

c) Time-out to check status: Only the shooter can call for a time-out to check the status of the set (such as the score or the availability of time-outs). This is NOT coaching unless initiated by the coach.

d) Time-out for coaching: Only the shooter or their coach can initiate coaching. The proper way to initiate coaching is to call for time-out and obtain an acknowledgement from the opponent. If this is done, the shooter gains these advantages:

- 1) The call for time-out is NOT coaching. The shooter or coach has the right to refuse the time-out and save that coaching period for later.
- 2) If a call for time-out is made, the opponent must warn the shooter if they have already received their limit of coaching periods allowed. If an acknowledgement is made with no warning given, the coaching is allowed even if over the limit. It is NOT a violation to coach without first calling for time-out, but that player loses the protections listed above. If your opponent coaches without first calling for time-out and they have already used their coaching limit, they have committed a foul. Any coach that attempts to take advantage by using time-out calls as signals to the shooter is violating league sportsmanship rules.

9. COACHING VIOLATIONS: Any action of a league member that doesn't conform to the above rules is a coaching violation. A coaching violation may or may not be a ball-in-hand foul. Violations are to be handled as described in the next two sections on sportsmanship and penalties.

10. SPORTSMANSHIP IN COACHING: Please note that the league is a combination of competition AND recreation. We need to work together to avoid both the extremes of nit-picking and of rules

abuse. Teams that continue to commit coaching violations after being warned are not acting in good sportsmanship.

11. PENALTIES FOR COACHING VIOLATIONS: Coaching in excess of the limit is an automatic ball-in-hand foul. Other violations are to be handled by warning the other team for a first time violation and marking one coaching period as being used. If the offending player or team continues to violate coaching rules, each later violation in that set is a ball-in-hand foul.

SPORTSMANSHIP

Good sportsmanship is expected in M8 Pool Leagues. The rules in M8 apply to all members. Everyone is expected to show respect to others in the league so that everyone can have a good time.

1. GOOD SPORTSMANSHIP: A good sport will help everyone have a positive experience. One of the most critical characteristics of a good sport is HONESTY. While opponents are not required to disclose strategic information, they ARE required to give honest answers to game specific questions or league rules when asked. Some examples are:

- a) Shooters sometimes forget which group of balls they are shooting. If asked by the opponent, the player must give an honest answer.
- b) If the opponent asks the shooter if they have committed a foul, the shooter must answer honestly.
- c) If the opponent asks for an explanation of a league rule, the player will answer honestly to the best of their knowledge.
- d) During the period when teams are allowed to make roster changes "on the spot", the captain MUST inform their opponent of any new players being added to the team when asked. If the opponent asks and the captain has either refused to answer or has replied that there would be no new players added to the team that night, that captain has lost the right to use a player that is not already printed on the roster form.

2. POOR SPORTSMANSHIP: Poor sportsmanship is NOT tolerated in M8 Pool Leagues. There are many ways for a member to

show poor sportsmanship. The following are a few examples. Some of these are subtle and some are very serious. All are forbidden.

a) Disregard for league rules: Any member who refuses to acknowledge official rules of the league can only suffer by doing it. Remember that ALL rules have a valid reason for being. It is your own responsibility to know these rules. You have the right to introduce your rule change ideas to be considered by your fellow M8 members.

b) Displays of anger: Players who make obvious displays of anger out of frustration are acting in an unacceptable manner. Even if that anger is not directed towards an opponent, it's unsportsmanlike behavior. Any member who damages equipment at a host location is responsible for making full restitution to that location before continuing play in the league.

c) Nit picking: Sometimes people are so obsessed with winning that they will clutch at any possibility, no matter how minor, to gain advantage. Please display an attitude that the game will be decided by the shots taken at the table and not by "nit picking" any rules.

d) Rating manipulation (Sandbagging): Any attempt to manipulate the rating of a player is cheating. If you believe an opponent is intentionally stretching games or playing fake safeties, please inform management. Do not allow an opposing team to pressure you into changing your score sheet. There is no requirement that score sheets match each other. Just play pool and let the ratings determine themselves. If you see any evidence of an opponent or their team trying to manipulate ratings, please inform the league office. Remember that anyone who does this is a cheat and that we rely on each other to provide fair play. Your league management takes this subject very seriously and is constantly working on methods to make the M8 handicapping system the best possible. Also please recognize

that it is not necessarily true that a player is a "sandbagger" just because they have a good set. Also give new players a chance to find their proper rating. It's not possible to claim 100% accuracy of a rating that is only based on a handful of scores.

e) Sharking: Sharking is an action or statement intended to cause the opponent to lose concentration and make a mistake. There are several techniques that have been used to this end and some are very subtle. It's not always possible to separate sharking from unintended behavior, but "sharks" often show themselves by repeating this behavior at critical times. **SHARKING IS CHEATING! Some traditional sharking techniques are:**

Verbal banter: The shark will constantly comment on the opponent's shots. They may repeatedly accuse them of blind luck or comment on the difficulty of making the next shot or getting out. They may constantly remind the opponent of the importance of the match or shot.

Approaching the table: The shark may constantly hang over the table during the opponent's turn. Players are to stay well away from the table when it is the opponent's turn.

"Breaking down the stick": One of the oldest and surprisingly successful methods of sharking is to unscrew your two piece cue when your opponent appears to be winning the match. **DO NOT DO THIS!** A player is assumed to concede the game when they do this.

f) Signals: Any form of a signal system is also cheating. If you believe your opponent is using signals to avoid coaching restrictions, notify league management.

g) Slow play: Excessively slow play is another difficult area to control. Sometimes slow play is a sharking technique and sometimes it is just the natural pace of the shooter. In order to achieve a balance that is in the interests of the majority of league members, management will

consider any pattern of slow play to be a violation of sportsmanship rules. If your natural tendency is to be highly deliberate in considering every shot, you will have to make a conscious effort to pick up your pace of play. At tournaments, a slow player may be placed on a stopwatch. If that occurs, any shot that takes 61 seconds for ANY reason will be a ball-in-hand foul. There will be no warning after the first shot.

h) Verbal abuse: Verbal abuse can take many forms. Especially offensive are racial, sexual, or ethnic insults. Any member that uses any slurs of this type towards another member will be required to make full apology or their membership will be suspended. Any member who does this repeatedly is not welcome in M8 and will be expelled. No one is allowed to verbally abuse another M8 member. Other forms of verbal abuse are dealt with according to the severity and frequency of the abuse.

i) Threats: Threats of physical harm are considered extremely serious and may be treated the same as physical abuse. No one has the right to cause another member to fear for their safety. This type of behavior is not tolerated in M8, and any member displaying this type of behavior will be EXPELLED!

j) Violent behavior: Any form of physical abuse of a league member is immediate grounds for expulsion. Any member who initiates violence towards another member is automatically expelled from the league.

3. PENALTIES FOR SPORTSMANSHIP VIOLATIONS:

Dealing with violations of sportsmanship rules is an extremely difficult area for two basic reasons. The first is that it is impossible for teams that are playing self supervised matches to impose penalties on each

other. The second is that the league management, who must make these decisions, is at a disadvantage by not being present and must decide based on second-hand information. Please see the next heading for advice to help management make proper decisions. The difficulty is further complicated by the fact that there are a large range of possible penalties. A member that has violated sportsmanship rules can be penalized by league management with anything from a warning to permanent expulsion from M8 (or anything in between). In all other areas of league rules, decisions are made without any consideration of the history of the teams or players involved. A rule is a rule and is always interpreted in the same way. Sportsmanship is very different! THE PAST BEHAVIORAL HISTORY OF A PLAYER OR TEAM ACCUSED OF SPORTSMANSHIP VIOLATIONS WILL BEAR HEAVILY ON THE DECISION MADE. The possible penalties are:

- a) **Warnings:** Whenever possible, management may give a warning to an offending member or team before penalizing them.
- b) **Ratings assignments:** If league management is satisfied that a player is seriously underrated, the right is reserved to assign that player a rating that will remove any unfair advantage.
- c) **Forfeiture of set, match, or standings points:** If it is the league management's opinion that a player or team has achieved an unfair advantage through unacceptable behavior, they will lose that advantage. This can go beyond forfeiture to include removing other team points that they had previously earned.
- d) **Removal as captain or coach:** A league member that is frequently involving themselves in disputes with opponents can lose the right to act as the team captain or the coach until it is management's opinion that they have demonstrated the maturity to perform these duties with good sportsmanship.

e) Disqualification from post-season tournaments: Severe violations may result in the team losing its right to qualify for post-season play for that season. This would also result in forfeiture of any prize money for that season.

f) Suspension: A member or team may be suspended from all league events for a period of time to be determined by management. This suspension may be open ended in time until that player or team has reasonably shown that they are able to control the offending behavior.

g) Expulsion: This applies to a member or team that has so extremely violated the sportsmanship rules that they have shown themselves to be completely unfit to participate. Their membership is revoked, they are not allowed at any league event, and they have no right to any refund of league fees paid.

4. RIGHT OF APPEAL: Members who have been penalized for sportsmanship violations have the right to appeal before a committee of neutral league members. It must be recognized that this cannot be done immediately and that the league management's decision is binding until the appeal is heard. This appeal is heard by a neutral group of players from that team's division. The decision of the peer committee is final. They may uphold or overrule the league management's decision. They may specify a different penalty (either more or less severe). They may dictate a future action to be taken by league management if the player or team commits a future offense.

5. BAD BEHAVIOR OF AN OPPONENT: If you are in the unfortunate position of having to deal with a poorly behaving opponent, please KEEP YOUR OWN COOL! You can't control the behavior of others, but you can control your own. If one of your own teammates is

out of line, it's your team's responsibility to control them or get them out of the area. One of the most important responsibilities of the captain is to maintain appropriate behavior from their team. Captains are expected to control situations and negotiate reasonable resolutions to conflicts. If this is not possible, call your league office. There is usually an official available by phone when you are playing. Since you can't impose sportsmanship penalties on each other, the only possible way to get an immediate decision is through management. If unsportsmanlike behavior continues, document it! Make a protest note on your score sheet and write a description of the problem on a separate sheet. The more evidence you can supply, the better job management can do to later resolve the issue. If possible, provide management with a way to contact a neutral observer or member of the other team to support your statements.

6. TOURNAMENT SPORTSMANSHIP VIOLATIONS:

Decisions are made on the spot. Each team is provided with the "Rules of Tournament Sportsmanship" as they begin any tournament. Please refer to those rules for details.

LEAGUE STRUCTURE

M8 is an independent handicapped pool league with its own copyrighted rating system, scoring system, and rules. Although it shares many characteristics with other recreational league organizations, many of its characteristics are unique to M8. This section will describe the way in which the league operates and its organization.

DIVISIONS: M8 teams are organized into divisions. Each division consists of 4 to 12 teams. The division is geographically set to reduce drive time between locations as much as possible. Each division will have matches scheduled for a given day of the week at a given time. Each division has its own self-contained schedule, play-offs, and awards. All teams in a division have the opportunity to qualify for league-wide tournaments (see the POST-SEASON PLAY section). Most divisions compete with the same structure and rules. There are some special divisions that may have differences from the others in some rules or prize funds. Teams in these special divisions will be provided with notification of any differences from this rule book.

TEAMS: A team consists of 5 to 8 M8 members. Five team members play in each team match. Restrictions on changes to the team roster are listed in the MISCELLANEOUS RULES section. Rules affecting the eligibility of team members for post-season play are listed in the POST-SEASON PLAY section. Fees responsibilities of the team are described in the FINANCIAL RULES section.

CAPTAIN: Although there is usually one person serving as team captain, it's acceptable for team members to share or rotate the captain's duties. The team is responsible for having a member that league management can contact as the captain if necessary. The captain is responsible for the following:

a) Organizer: The captain makes sure that the team has the right players at the right place at the right time. They ensure that the team roster is correct and that members' eligibility is maintained. They schedule the members for play and are responsible for the team adjusting to any schedule changes that may arise.

b) Communicator: The captain provides league management with any information needed to protect the team's interests and to satisfy league rules. They make sure that team members are aware of information provided by league management.

c) Negotiator: The captain represents the team's interests in issues that require negotiation with other teams (such as rules questions, scheduling of make-ups, etc.). They take control of any situation where emotions may arise and ensure that the team acts in a sportsmanlike manner to resolve any disputes that may occur.

d) Rules Authority: The captain is knowledgeable about the league rules and helps their teammates to also learn these rules. They are provided with a rule book and are invited to contact the league office for any interpretation or further rule information needed.

e) Treasurer: The captain protects the team's financial interests by taking responsibility for keeping the records necessary to ensure that all fees are paid by team members.

COACH: Each player has the right to choose a coach. Details are listed in the COACHING RULES section. Any team member can act as a coach.

M8 MEMBERS: A player must be a member of M8 to be on a team roster or compete in M8 events. There are certain rules and restrictions involving membership.

a) No professionals allowed: M8 members are amateur pool players. The standards used for determining professionalism are: Is this player a touring member of the MPBA or WPBA? (ALL "circuit pros" are required to join one of these organizations.) Does this player make their living playing the game of pool? Please recognize that there are amateur players who have the ability to compete as professionals, but make their living in other ways and shoot pool as a hobby.

b) Age: There is no age restriction set by M8. However, players are warned that most league activity takes place in locations with alcohol present. An M8 member younger than the legal drinking age must conform to all laws and policies of the establishment where that league activity is occurring. They must recognize that they have no inherent right to compete in any M8 event that excludes them because of age. Many areas allow the presence of a minor when accompanied by a legal guardian. It is the player's responsibility to know these restrictions and obey them. Any underage member that attempts to violate age laws or policies affecting an M8 event will be immediately expelled from the league.

c) Proof of identity: M8 players must always be able to provide proof of their identity. If a referee or opponent asks for this proof, they must request this in a sportsmanlike manner. Contact league management

for assistance if a player cannot provide proof of identity. If a player is refused entrance to a location because they don't carry proper I.D., there is no allowance made in other league rules (the team must either play five other members or forfeit the fifth set). Penalties for playing another person using the member's name are listed in Illegal Substitutions in the MISCELLANEOUS RULES section.

d) Playing on more than one team: Members are allowed to play on as many teams as they wish, but only on one team in a given division in a given season. Members are not normally allowed to change teams within the same division if they have played that season for another team. A change can be approved for team survival purposes if league Management and the majority of teams within the division agree to the change.

e) Playing more than once in a match: A player can only play one set for their team in a match. The only exception to this occurs in rare cases during post-season play (see Gladiator Matches in the POST-SEASON PLAY section).

f) Sportsmanlike play: Players must respect the rules and spirit of sportsmanship. A member that continually violates these rules will be penalized. This can include the revocation of their membership (see SPORTSMANSHIP section).

POST-SEASON PLAY

The major rewards of M8 are earned by players and teams after the regularly scheduled season ends. The seeding and pairings of teams are determined by the regular season point standings. **ALL** teams have an opportunity to compete for some portion of these rewards in post-season play. The great majority of league rules are unchanged from regular to post-season, but there are some differences. Those differences are detailed in this section. There are a few special M8 divisions which may have post-season rules which differ from this. Teams in those divisions will be informed of any exceptions to this section.

1. REGULAR SEASON POINT STANDINGS: The division point standings at the end of regular season determine the seeding of teams in post-season play.

a) Championship teams: The teams that finish in the top four positions become the ones that compete for the Division Championship, the Season Championship Tournament, and earn ranking points toward the M8 Annual Team Championship.

b) Consolation teams: The teams that finish in the fifth through last positions within the division compete for the division's Consolation Championship and the Season Consolation Tournament. They do not earn ranking points during that season towards the M8 Annual Team Championship.

2. DIVISION MVP: At the end of the regular season, each division has a player who earns the title of Most Valuable Player. Players are

ranked according to three factors: The standings points they earn for their team, their set wins, and their set losses. Total points scored by the player are added to a 200 point bonus for each set win and a 200 point penalty for each loss. Players who receive forfeit wins earn 125 points, but do not receive the extra 200 point set win bonus. The resulting total becomes that player's MVP ranking. The player who has the highest MVP ranking at the end of regular season is the Division MVP.

3. TIE-BREAKS: There are four possible situations that require a procedure for breaking ties:

a) Team standings: Since the point standings affect the teams' rankings and seeding for post-season play, a tie-break is needed if two teams finish in a tie.

- 1) 1st - The head to head point totals of the teams during that season.
- 2) 2nd - The total sets won during the regular season by each team.
- 3) 3rd - The total points lost to each team's regular season opponents.
- 4) 4th - The two teams' season records against the team which has finished immediately below them in the division standings.

b) Division MVP:

- 1) 1st - If the tied players had competed against each other during the regular season, the player who had earned the most head to head points is the MVP.
- 2) 2nd - The average ratings of their regular season opponents are compared. If there is a difference of 5 or more rating points between these averages, the player who has competed against the higher rated opponents is the MVP.
- 3) 3rd - The players play a single set to determine the MVP.

c) **Gladiator match:** Since post-season matches are sudden death, it can happen that two teams have played less than five sets and do not have a clear winner. In the case that neither team has another player present to accept a forfeit, each team is allowed to choose one of their members who has already played a set. All other league rules are in force and scoring of the match is otherwise the same.

d) **Dead Heat Tie:** It's possible for two teams to have scored the exact same point totals at the end of a five-set match. During regular season play, this will stand as a tie. During post-season play, a dead heat is broken by awarding the win to the team that has won three of the five sets played.

4. PLAYER ELIGIBILITY FOR POST-SEASON PLAY: In order to help ensure fairness of competition during post-season matches, there are minimums of the number of times that each player must have played with their team and the number of scores in their M8 history. Scores in a player's history can come from any recorded M8 match. They DO NOT have to be connected to any given team or season. Any member who has not completed a membership application for that year and returned it to the league office is NOT eligible for post-season events. However, if that player completes the membership application prior to shooting a post season set, they can then become eligible. Members of a team who are ineligible cannot play, but they can be used as forfeits for team rating limit purposes. These are the numbers required **BEFORE** entering the following events:

	<u>Times with Team</u>	<u>Total M8 Scores</u>
Division Play-offs	4	7
Season Tournaments	5	8
Annual Team Championship	6	9

Times with Team: The number of sets played THAT season as a member of THAT team. In the case of the Annual Team Championship, this is the number of times played with that team over the tournament qualifying year. If a player is dropped from a team roster and later added again, they must start this number over again.

Total M8 Scores: The number of set scores that the player must have in their rating history as a member of M8.

Note: The only exception to this is if 50% or more of the players on a roster are brand new to M8 this season. In this case the Total M8 Scores are 5 for division Play-offs, 6 for season tournaments and 7 for M8 Annual Team Championship. This number applies **ONLY** to the members that are new to M8 this season.

Special case - A player can receive credit for one set played as a member of their team if:

- a) They have previously been present to play for that team and have received a forfeited set.
- b) They were listed on the score sheet from that match.
- c) The player has satisfied requirements for the number of total M8 scores in their rating history. No exceptions will be made.
- d) No more than one set can be credited no matter how many times that player has received forfeits.

5. PLAYERS ELIGIBLE ON MORE THAN ONE TEAM:

Many league members choose to play in more than one division. When post-season tournaments mix the competition of all divisions, complications can result. A player who has earned post-season eligibility on more than one team retains their right to compete with each of those teams. This does create the need for these added rules:

- a)** If the player is eligible on the rosters of two teams who happen to meet in a tournament match, the player cannot play against him/herself. They can play in this match for either or both teams, but they must play in the first, second or third set only. If they play for both teams, they must obviously play for one team in the first or second set and the other in the third. This rule can be suspended upon request from BOTH team captains.
- b)** A team who has an eligible member who is playing at the same time for another team has the right to list that player for a set, delay the set, and then continue to the next match-up. This player must be involved in another M8 tournament match. As soon as that player is available, the set will begin on the first open table. This determination will be made by the tournament director.
- c)** The above right to delay a set does not exclude a team from normal forfeit rules. Once a player has been listed and matched up, they can't be later withdrawn. If all other sets of the match are completed and the player is not yet available, the by-passed set becomes a forfeit. If the Tournament Director decides that a team is stalling for an absent player, ONE warning will be given. After that point, any evidence of stalling tactics will be considered a violation of sportsmanship rules and the Tournament Director will penalize accordingly. This can include forfeiture of match.

6. TEAM RATING CERTIFICATION: Each team must return their Team Rating Certification sheet before playing any post-season match. If any members of the team have pool playing abilities beyond their rating, their captain is expected to raise them to the proper level. Any team that does not sign and return this sheet may have ALL members of their team raised three rating points for each post-season match the team plays until the sheet is signed. Ratings of members at the end of post-season play are compared to their ratings at the beginning. If these changes exceed the limits shown below, the penalty will be as follows:

a) Potential Disqualification - If the rating of a team member rises from the beginning of post-season play by 15 or more points OR if the total ratings of all team members rise by 40 or more points, the team is potentially disqualified. This is not automatic. If the team is determined to be guilty of rating manipulation, the team is disqualified. A team that has been disqualified on this basis has the right to appeal before a committee of neutral league members. The decision of that committee is final.

b) Automatic Disqualification - If the rating of a team member rises from the beginning of post-season play by 20 or more points OR if the total ratings of all team members rise by 60 or more points, the team is automatically disqualified. There is no right of appeal.

7. LEAGUE AWARDS: M8 provides the following awards to its members and teams:

a) Division Championship Team: In each division each season, the team that wins the Championship Play-offs is the Division Champion.

A trophy is awarded to that team and an individual trophy is awarded to each team member that is qualified for post-season play.

b) Consolation Champion Team: In each Consolation Bracket each season, the team that wins the Bracket Play-offs is the Consolation Champion. A plaque is awarded to that team if there are at least 3 teams in the bracket.

c) Most Valuable Player: In each division each season, a trophy is awarded to the Division MVP and they are offered a discounted direct entry into the annual singles championship

d) Cash Prizes: Every team wins some prize money in each season. The prizes rise as the team advances through play-offs and the post-season tournaments. The exact amount of these prizes changes from season to season and year to year depending on the size of the league and the fees collected.

8. OTHER POST-SEASON SPECIAL RULES: Almost all league rules are exactly the same in regular season play and in post-season play. There are some essential differences listed in this section. If a rule pertains to a particular event, it is listed in the paragraph for that event. If it applies to multiple events, it is listed here.

a) Sudden death: All post-season matches end at the time when it is agreed that one of the teams has a lead that the other team can't possibly overcome. Teams are strongly advised to be careful to be sure that a comeback is not possible before admitting defeat. Factors such as the possible team rating bonus or penalty and forfeit rules can have a material effect. If in doubt, teams should continue play.

b) Forfeit scoring: In any post-season match, the team receiving a forfeited set does not receive the same points as regular season. In

the OPEN format they will receive 100 points plus the rating of the player who receives the forfeit for this set. In the ADVANCED format they will receive 250 points for this set. In the MASTERS format they will receive 200 points for this set.

c) Presence of a referee (tournaments only): Some league rules exist because of the necessity for teams to be able to resolve situations without a neutral authority present. Since tournaments have a Tournament Director (hereafter called T.D.) acting as a referee, there are some differences. These differences are:

1) 45 degree rule: This rule does not necessarily apply. Any shot involving this rule will not be considered a foul if the shooter conforms to the rule, but the T.D. has the ability to determine that a player may have been able to execute a legal stroke while shooting from an angle that is less than 45 degrees.

2) Breaking down the cue stick - If it is the T.D.'s opinion that a player has unscrewed a two piece cue stick during the opponent's inning, that player has conceded the game. The shooter is awarded 14 points for the game and the opponent receives one point for each of his/her balls pocketed.

3) Stopwatch: If the T.D. has judged that one player or team is responsible for an unacceptable pace of play, the T.D. will warn that team. If there is not an increase in this pace which is acceptable to the T.D., that player will be timed by a stopwatch. The first time that player exceeds 60 seconds between strokes, they will be warned and must shoot immediately. After the first warning, any delay of 61 seconds will result in a ball-in-hand foul. There will be no consideration given to the reason for the delay. There will be no subsequent warnings.

- 4) Tournament rules sheet:** The T.D. provides all teams with a sheet listing tournament rules as they begin their competition. This sheet is an extension of this rule book and describes the T.D.'s authority.
- 5) Coaching violations:** The T.D. decides the point at which fouls are to be assessed for these violations according to guidelines established by the tournament rules sheet.
- 6) Sportsmanship violations:** The T.D. has the authority to assess penalties on the spot for unsportsmanlike behavior. These are detailed on the tournament rules sheet.
- 7) Shot calls by the T.D.:** The T.D. is available to players as a referee for questionable shots. Any player can call for a time-out for the referee. It does not count as coaching. A player who has ignored a call for the referee and shoots without waiting has committed a foul. If called in officially, the T.D. will rule as a foul or a legal stroke. If the T.D. happens to witness a shot without having been called as a referee, they will not offer a ruling. It is very important to call the T.D. for questionable shots before the shot happens.
- 8) T.D. in competition:** At some sites, the T.D. may also be competing. They are to disqualify themselves from any decision that may affect their own team. Shot calls will be made by a neutral party. Rule interpretations and appeals can be made by calling the league office.

- 9. DIVISION PLAY-OFFS:** Play-offs are paired by finish position.
- a)** The first place team earns home field vs. the fourth place team. The second place team earns home field advantage vs. the third place team. The two winning teams compete for the Division Championship, with home field awarded to the team with the higher finish position.

b) Consolation play-offs are paired by finish position. Since there are differing numbers of teams in divisions, Consolation play-offs are divided into brackets of four teams. This will give all Consolation teams an equal opportunity to advance. If necessary, cross-divisional brackets are formed. In some cases, byes must be awarded. The two winning teams from the first round of each bracket will compete for the Consolation Championship.

10. SEASON TOURNAMENTS: After play-offs end each season, all divisions are combined into two league wide tournaments: the Championship and the Consolation. These are single-elimination tournaments. The bulk of the season's prize pool is awarded according to success in these tournaments.

a) Qualifying for the Season Tournaments

1) Championship: The regular season first place team is automatically qualified for the Season Championship, regardless of play-off results. The second, third and fourth place teams must win the Division Championship match to qualify for this event.

2) Consolation: To qualify for this event, a Consolation team must win their bracket's Consolation Championship (2nd week play-off win) to qualify for this event.

b) Seeding and byes: Preferential seeding is awarded to teams in the form of byes. The number of byes available changes each season according to the number of qualified teams. Teams are ranked into the categories listed below.

1) Championship Seeding:

#1 Teams that both finished first place and won the Division Championship.

#2 Teams that finished first, but did not win the Division Championship.
#3 Teams that finished below first place and won the Division Championship.

2) Consolation Seeding:

#1 Teams that won their Consolation bracket with back to back wins.

#2 Teams that won their Consolation bracket after receiving a bye.

11. M8 ANNUAL TEAM CHAMPIONSHIP: The Annual Team Championship is the premier event in M8 Pool Leagues.

a) Team eligibility: The team roster for the Annual Championship is the Fall Season roster. Players must be members of the Fall team to be eligible for this event.

b) Ranking points: If there are byes available, they are issued based on ranking points earned throughout the year. The Fall team must have at least four members who were on a Winter or Summer team roster in order to retain ranking points earned by that Winter or Summer team. The key to eligibility is four common players between the qualified team and any past teams. An eligible team has the rights to past credits regardless of the team name, division played, night of play, home location, or captain. Ranking Points earned are as follows:

Regular season finish

First place - 6 points

Second place - 4 points

Third place - 2 points

Fourth place - 1 point

Division Championship play-offs

3 points for each play-off match won

Season Championship Tournament

First place - 20 points

Second place - 14 points

Third place - 10 points

Fourth place - 7 points

5th-8th - 4 points

9th-16th - 2 points

c) Tie breaks: If there is a tie between teams for byes, the higher ranking will be awarded to the team that has scored the highest points per set average during all seasons in which that team has earned ranking points.

12. SINGLES AND SPECIAL TOURNAMENTS: M8 also organizes other tournaments, the most important of which is the Annual Singles Championship. Since there are many possible formats for a special tournament, any differences from this rule book will be provided at these tournaments. Rules determining play in the Singles Championship are provided to players as they enter, but the basic format is described here.

a) Singles Format: The Singles Championship is a two level event. Throughout the qualifying period, groups of four to eight eligible members compete in Qualifying Tournaments. The winner of each qualifier advances to the Singles Finals.

1) Qualifying tournaments: These can be run at any time during the qualifying period. They are designed as double elimination tournaments of eight player brackets. It is possible to play with less than eight, but no Qualifying Tournament can be allowed more than one bye per player (minimum of four players). Players compete at their current M8 rating.

2) Singles Finals: All qualifier winners compete in a double elimination tournament using the flight system. Players will be seeded in flights by rating. This will ensure that lower skilled players can rise in the tournament while competing against others of their same general abilities.

b) Singles Eligibility: In order to compete in the Singles Championship, a player must satisfy these rules:

- 1) They must have a currently paid M8 membership.
- 2) They must be currently on a Fall M8 team roster.
- 3) They must have a rating based on at least seven league scores to enter a Qualifying Tournament.
- 4) They must have a rating based on at least twelve league scores to compete in the Singles Finals.

SCORING/RATING SYSTEM

The heart of the M8 Pool Leagues is its unique scoring and rating system. The M8 rating system is well tested and we are confident that it is the fairest and most accurate handicapping system in the game of 8-Ball. This section contains rules affecting players' ratings and the scoring of matches.

1. PLAYER RATINGS: Ratings are determined by a proprietary computerized formula. This formula tracks several factors of each player's record of performance within the league. It is not and will not be published.

a) Range and Limits of Ratings: The minimum allowed player rating is 30. The maximum rating is 125. Their rating becomes their "race number" (see SCORING RULES) and the higher the skills of the player, the higher the rating. The ratings of all players are re-calculated after each time they play an M8 set and that rating can be any number from 30 to 125. Although regular season and play-off scores are entered before the following week, there is usually a delay before tournament and special event scores affect the player's current rating.

b) Changes in Ratings: The M8 formula averages a large number of the player's scores. Because of this, a single score will seldom affect the rating of an established player by more than three points. However, especially with new players, the rating can sometimes change in a much larger range. Although not common, it is possible for a rating to rise after a loss or drop after a win. If this happens to you, do not assume an error or a flaw. Remember that your rating is an

average of scores and the most recent score you have made is no more important than the others factoring into your rating. Once a player has established a full score history, each new score causes an older score to be removed from the calculation.

c) Ratings of Players Joining New Teams or Seasons: Once an M8 member has established a rating, that score history follows with them throughout their competition within the league. If they join a new team or continue into a new season, their beginning scores are the most recent they have earned in M8 sets. No matter how long they may have been inactive, they will pick up where they left off.

d) Non-rated Players: Players who are new to M8 have no established rating. With the exception of known highly skilled players (see Assignments), they are rated as an "NR". They do not have a true rating until they have competed in three sets. Any player rated "NR" in the OPEN format will race to 45 points with their opponent. In the ADVANCED and MASTERS formats they will race to 50 with their opponent. Both players race to the same number, regardless of the rating of the opponent. Please remember that a new player is NOT a "45" or "50", they are unrated.

e) Assignment of Ratings: The overwhelming majority of M8 members are rated only by the scores from the sets they play. However, there are situations that require an assignment of a player's rating. They fall into two categories - Automatic and Discretionary:

1) Automatic Assignments:

a. A player who is new to M8, but is known to have exceptional pool skills, will not have the right to determine their rating by the three "races

to 45". They will begin the league with a rating appropriate to their known ability.

b. Once a player has proven a level of performance, they establish minimum rating levels. Once a player has at least 12 scores in their league history, their highest earned rating is monitored. Their rating will never be allowed to be more than 10 points below that level.

c. The ONLY exception allowed to these automatic assignments is a PERMANENT loss of physical capabilities due to injury or disease. Temporary or correctable problems do not qualify for an exception.

2) Discretionary Assignments:

a. Players must be given a reasonable chance to establish a proper rating. The formula has proven to do an excellent job of rating players in accordance with their abilities, but there are two reasons for inaccuracies in a rating. If the player has only a small number of scores, the factors of luck, inconsistency, and opponent's skills can create a sizeable discrepancy. If that player's league performance has been significantly below their abilities at the game, their rating will be incorrect. During regular season, players are expected to make their best effort and allow their scores to correct any discrepancies that may exist. However, your team has a responsibility to make corrections before post-season play if any members have ratings below their true abilities. This requirement is described in the POST-SEASON PLAY section.

b. League management MUST retain the authority to assign ratings to players that are obviously rated below their abilities and are not entering scores that will correct this. (see SPORTSMANSHIP RULES section). Any player who has been assigned in this manner will be notified by the league office.

f) Team Rating Limit: Because higher skilled players have an advantage over lower skilled players, it isn't healthy for the league to allow teams to consist of a group of "all stars". To prevent this, there is a team rating limit which is presently 325 points. In any given match, a team that plays five players whose ratings add up to a total of more than 325 will pay a penalty in team points. See the SCORING RULES for the details of this rule.

2. SCORING RULES: Rules affecting the scoring of sets and matches are listed here. See the "How to Score" hand-out supplied by the league office for details and examples.

a) Individual Set Scoring: Points are scored at the end of each game. The game winner receives seven points and each player receives one point for every one of their group of balls that has been pocketed. If, at the end of a game, ONE of the players has met or exceeded their own rating total, they have won the set. If, at the end of a game, BOTH of the players have met or exceeded their own rating total, the game winner is the set winner. In the OPEN format at the end of the set, each player receives the points that they have scored and the set winner receives an extra 100 point winner bonus. In the ADVANCED format each player receives the points that they have scored and the set winner receives the 100 point winner bonus and the "margin of victory" points. In the MASTERS format the winner receives the 100 point winner bonus and the "margin of victory" points. The player that loses the set receives zero points.

NOTES:

- 1) Neither player has earned any points for a game until that game ends. If both players reached their total during the same game, the order in which they pocketed the balls has no meaning.
 - 2) Points are scored regardless of how the balls were pocketed. You simply count what is left on the table and subtract from seven.
 - 3) If the game ends on an open table (8-on-the-break or game-ending foul while table is open), the game winner chooses "stripes" or "solids". Their opponent takes the other group.
 - 4) Be sure that any safeties played are marked on the score sheet. Players are requested to inform the scorekeepers when they have played a safety. Any pattern of under-marking safeties or refusing to admit that a safety has been played is a violation of sportsmanship rules and penalties will follow (see SPORTSMANSHIP section).
 - 5) Remember that the player's option given in a game-ending foul or 8-on-the-break situation (see GAME RULES) can affect the time at which a game truly ends.
- b) Team Match Scoring:** At the end of each set, each team records the points scored and the ratings of both players in the team score section of the score sheet. At the end of the match, each team will have earned a total number of points scored and will have a total of the ratings of their members who played in the match. For purposes of determining each team's total ratings played, unrated players are counted as "45" in the OPEN format and "50" in the ADVANCED and MASTERS formats. Players who have an established rating count as their true rating, regardless if they race to their own rating or they compete in a "race-to-45 or 50" with an unrated opponent.

1) Rating Bonus: In the OPEN and ADVANCED formats, if the total of the team's ratings used is less than the 325 point rating limit, the team will receive that difference to be added to their points scored.

2) Rating Penalty: In the OPEN and ADVANCED formats, if the total of the team's ratings used is more than the 325 point rating limit, the team will pay a penalty of five times the difference to be subtracted from their points scored.

3) Forfeits: Most rules pertaining to forfeits are in the MISCELLANEOUS RULES section. Rules here only apply to the scoring of those forfeits. For each set forfeited:

a> Both teams must list a member for each set forfeited. The forfeiting team may list any member that has not played in the match. The team receiving the forfeit must list a player who is present at the time and has not played in the match.

b> In the regular season, for each forfeited set, the forfeiting team receives 0 points. In the OPEN, ADVANCED, and MASTERS formats, the team receiving the forfeit is given a total of 150 points, regardless of the player's rating that is put up.

c> In the OPEN and ADVANCED formats, both teams add the totals of all player ratings, just as if all five sets had been played. The forfeiting team pays the penalty if they have exceeded the Rating Limit, but receive no bonus if they are under the limit. The team receiving the forfeit will add a bonus or subtract a penalty as though the entire match had been played.

NOTES:

1> If both teams prefer to make up the sets, see Make-Ups.

2> If neither team has five players present, see Unplayed Sets.

3> To prevent potential abuse in a "sudden-death" situation, scoring rules for forfeits in post-season play are modified from those listed here (see Forfeit scoring rule in POST-SEASON PLAY section).

4) Make-Ups: If teams agree to finish the match at a later time, scoring is suspended at the end of the last set played. No Rating Bonus or Penalty can be calculated until the match is completed. For other rules affecting make-ups, see the MISCELLANEOUS RULES section.

a> Teams must note the agreement and the date they will perform the make-up in the "Messages to League Office:" area of the score sheet.

b> All players are listed at the ratings they have at the time they actually play.

c> All other rules are in effect just as if the entire match had been played at one time.

5) Unplayed sets: If neither team has enough players present to finish the match, they are allowed to choose a make-up if they conform to all other rules. If a set is left as unplayed, each team will receive the total points that they have scored to that point. Both teams lose the right to a Rating Bonus.

Scorekeeping responsibilities: Good scorekeeping is essential for the league to be able to provide you with a high quality system and accurate ratings. Following are a listing of rules on scorekeeping and a list of those items on your score sheet that are required and those that are provided to help you, but are optional.

1) The scorekeeper can be anyone; they do not have to be a member of the team. Team members are encouraged to share scorekeeping responsibilities. This helps your members to pick up on league rules and strategies.

2) Each team must score each set. If a match is played on two tables, each team is required to score BOTH tables. This is essential for protection against errors or abuse. SCOREKEEPERS ARE NOT ALLOWED TO COPY THE SCORE SHEET OF ANOTHER TEAM. INDEPENDENT DATA IS ESSENTIAL FOR PROPER HANDICAPPING!

3) It is a good idea to check with the other team occasionally to avoid errors, but DON'T ALLOW ANOTHER TEAM TO PRESSURE YOU INTO CHANGING ANY SCORING YOU FEEL IS CORRECT. If the two score sheets disagree, the league office will handle it.

4) Required score sheet information: The following must be recorded by each team:

a> For each player in each set: Team number, Player rating, Player number, Safeties, Points scored in each game, Innings in each game, Total innings for the set, Total points scored, Winner's Bonus, Player's total points earned

b> For the match: Pool table size. "Messages to League Office:" Any information that your team needs the get to the league office, should be noted here (roster changes, questions, etc.). If you note it here, it will be seen. Captain's signature: Both captains' should sign both score sheets at the end of the match to signify that they are accepting the results.

MISCELLANEOUS RULES

This section lists various rules affecting M8 play. These rules can have a significant effect on your team.

1. ROSTER CHANGES: Teams are allowed to make changes in the roster during the first five weeks of each season. From the sixth week until four weeks before the season's end, a team may make a change only for its own survival; the resulting roster can have no more than six members. No changes to the roster are allowed for any reason during post-season play. When adding a player to a roster, the team **MUST** check with the league office to obtain that player's rating. **CHANGES AFTER THE FIFTH WEEK MUST BE PRE-APPROVED BY LEAGUE MANAGEMENT.**

2. UNPAID PLAYERS: If a player hasn't paid their annual dues by the week that they play, their team will lose any points that player has scored **PLUS** a 200 point penalty. You are better off forfeiting a set than using an unpaid player. **DO NOT USE A PLAYER WHO HASN'T PAID THEIR MEMBERSHIP DUES.**

3. CHOICE OF TABLE: At locations with more than one pool table, the home team has the right to choice of table. However, this right of choice does not extend to poorly maintained equipment. Size of table is not an issue.

4. ILLEGAL SUBSTITUTION: If a team is found to have played one person using another player's name and rating, that team has lost all points for the entire team match. The opposing team is allowed the option of accepting the results of the match or accepting a five-set forfeit. If this happens during post-season play, the team is disqualified from any further play for that season and forfeits all prize money earned to that point. Remember that each player is required to provide proof of their identity. If you are unable to positively establish an opponent's identity, continue play and notify league management as soon as possible. Write down a detailed description of the player. League management will take the steps necessary to prove whether that player is the proper person.

5. FORFEITS: Teams are expected to be present and ready to begin matches at the scheduled time. A team may begin a match with only one player present, but there is a time limit beyond which forfeits are awarded to the team that is present. At 15 minutes past the scheduled start time, both teams **MUST** have a player ready to begin the match. If a team is not present, one set is forfeited to the opposing team. At 30 minutes past scheduled start, this becomes two sets. At 45 minutes past scheduled start, all five sets of the match are forfeited. The team receiving a forfeit must have a player that hasn't previously shot in the match present to receive a forfeit. Consult the **SCORING AND THE RATING SYSTEM** section for instructions on scoring this. Teams are welcome to re-schedule instead of accepting forfeits. No team has a right to demand a make-up unless prior arrangements had been made and agreed upon. Any team that harasses or insults another team for taking a forfeit will be penalized by M8 management.

If a set ends after the match has begun with no team member available to continue, the team is allowed 15 minutes to have a player ready

ONLY IF the following are true:

- a) The team was ready to begin the match on time. If any sets had been forfeited at any other time in the match, there is no time allowed.
- b) There is no other team member available. A team cannot use this rule to wait for a specific player.
- c) No earlier set was delayed by the team. This is only allowed once in a match.
- d) This is done on an emergency basis only. A team that has repeatedly taken advantage of this rule will have this right taken away.

NOTES:

- 1) If a team has to forfeit a set after the match has begun, it must be the last set of the match. (For example, a team isn't allowed to choose to forfeit the 4th set and play the 5th.) All sets are played before forfeit sets are listed.
- 2) There are special cases where a team would lose more points by using a present higher-rated player than they would by forfeiting. Teams retain the right to forfeit a set, even if an available member is present.

6. SCHEDULING: Each division's season is scheduled at the beginning with five separate factors balanced to ensure the fairest possible pairing of the matches. However, many situations can arise which will affect scheduling (see the following five rules). For this reason, each team is provided one preliminary copy of the season schedule on the first night of play. Each team will receive a permanent schedule usually by the 5th week. If a division starts its season with an

odd number of teams, there will be a spot held open as "To Be Announced". If a new team is found to fill that spot by the 5th week, the by-passed matches will be converted to make-up matches. If not, they will become byes.

7. MAKE-UPS AND RE-SCHEDULING MATCHES: There are various reasons for two teams to have a make-up match to re-schedule. A make-up can consist of a full match or a given number of sets. If your team has a make-up you have certain responsibilities. All make-ups are the responsibility of the two teams to schedule. If you need information to contact the other team or are having trouble in making an agreement, contact the league office. No make-ups are allowed less than seven days BEFORE the last scheduled date of regular season. Teams are required to give at least five days notice to the league office before playing a make-up. If the make-up was created at the request of one of the teams, they must make every reasonable effort to accommodate the other team's wishes in re-scheduling. If the teams are not able to agree on a date before the deadline, neither team will receive points for the match and both will be responsible for weekly fees. If it is league management's decision that one of the teams caused the deadline to pass, the other team will receive a forfeit.

8. TEAM RIGHTS TO RE-SCHEDULE: Normally, a team has no right to demand re-scheduling of a match - they can only request this of the opposing team. However, the following two situations do give the team an automatic right:

a) Bad Weather Policy: If an OFFICIAL weather emergency has been declared, a team can make notification that they will re-schedule. Individual players or teams don't have the right to decide that the weather is unacceptable - it must be declared by local weather services. The team must notify the league office prior to scheduled start time or they may lose this right. In past weather emergencies, the large majority of teams have decided to play as scheduled.

b) Holiday Scheduling: In order to finish in time to qualify for post-season tournaments, it is sometimes necessary to schedule play on a holiday. If a team has been scheduled on a holiday, they have an automatic right to re-schedule. They will lose this right if they do not notify the league office at least 21 days in advance.

9. BYES: It is not always possible to schedule every division with an even number of teams. If this happens, there will be one team in the division each week with a bye. Byes will rotate amongst the teams until each team has had one bye and then the cycle will start again. During any complete cycle (each team receives one bye); no points are awarded to a team with a bye. If a cycle is incomplete, each team with a bye will be awarded the average number of points that they have scored up to that point in the season.

10. DROP-OUT TEAMS: A team that does not finish a season that it has started can create several problems of fairness within the division point standings. If this should happen, league management will do everything possible to remove that team from having an effect on the other teams. Methods used include "wiping out" some or all past matches, awarding average points, converting to byes, awarding

the maximum points scored against the drop-out to all teams, and others. The method used may be any one or a combination of these. It will be the one that management believes to be the best in eliminating the drop-out from affecting the other teams.

11. REPLACEMENT TEAMS: It is sometimes possible to find a new team willing to replace a drop-out. The replacement would accept the points earned by the drop-out and would continue the season. The replacement would also have the right to play up to three make-ups for bye weeks created after the drop-out.

12. TWO TABLE PLAY: Matches can be played on one or more tables by agreement of the teams. If the teams do not agree on this, the following rules apply:

a) Until 1 hour after scheduled start time, either team has the right to demand one table.

b) At 1 hour after scheduled start time, either team has the right to demand two table play if a second table is available.

NOTES:

1) No team has the right to refuse this rule. A team that does not promptly comply or harasses the opposing team runs the risk of forfeiting the remainder of the match.

2) There is no right to wait until the end of a game or set. If a team properly demands two table play, the opponent must make the match-up for the following set immediately.

3) A second table must be available. Some locations have only one table, some location owners refuse to allow use of a second table.

- 4) Times given are after the SCHEDULED start, not the actual start.
- 5) There is no consideration given for waiting for a late player. Normal forfeit rules apply.

13. SMOKING BREAK: The Indoor Smoking Ban was put into effect in Minnesota on October 1, 2007. M8 has instituted a new rule because of this. Effective October 1, 2008, either player in a set may request a smoking break, to last no longer than 5 minutes, **one** time during the set. This can only be requested by the player winning the previous game, and must be taken prior to the start of the next game.

FINANCIAL RULES

1. MEMBERSHIP DUES: Each member of M8 must pay an annual membership to participate in the league. This is \$15 per calendar year. Once they have paid their membership dues, they are then free to play in as many different teams, seasons, home locations, tournaments, special events, etc. as they wish. Only one membership per year is required. All members must renew their membership each year at the start of the Winter Season. If they were a new member in the previous Fall Season and consequently were only able to play one season for their \$15 dues, they can receive membership for the following year for only \$7 ONLY IF they renew in the Winter Season. This right to reduced dues is lost if the renewal is not paid during the Winter Season.

2. OTHER SANCTION FEES: Some of M8's divisions offer sanctioning with other organizations. This opens more tournament opportunities for these divisions. See the sanctioning documentation provided in your team envelope for details and fees.

3. UNPAID PLAYERS ON THE ROSTER: Teams are allowed to have unpaid members on their roster who haven't played in any matches, but only until the fifth week of play. By that time, the team must either drop them from the roster or the team will become responsible for that player's membership dues.

4. TEAM DEPOSIT: Each team must have a \$30 deposit on account with the league. This deposit IS NOT a fee. It is only a "good faith" guarantee and is fully refundable if all fees have been paid. Drop-out teams or teams that are excessively behind on fees will forfeit their deposit.

5. WEEKLY PLAYING FEES: Playing fees for regular season and play-off team matches are \$35.00 per team. Both teams owe full weekly playing fees even in the case of forfeits. Teams that draw a bye do not owe weekly fees for that bye. There are no playing fees for the Season Championship or Consolation Tournaments or for the Annual Team Championship Tournament.

6. COST OF GAMES: Teams are expected to split the cost of the games played. There are some special situations listed in the GAME RULES section that require one player to pay the cost of retrieving a pocketed ball. See that section for details.

7. CHECKS: Teams are welcome to pay fees by check. Please make them out to "M8". Returned checks will be assessed the check amount plus a \$10 fee if paid within 30 days of return date. Regardless of the person who has written the check, the TEAM is responsible for the check and any possible charges.

8. TEAM RESPONSIBILITY FOR FEES: The entire team is responsible for their playing fees, membership dues, deposit, etc. Any team that has outstanding back fees or returned checks will have all prize money held until those charges are paid.

9. DROP-OUT TEAMS: Teams that drop out during the course of a season cause several problems for the other teams in their division and for league management. They can create fairness problems in division point standings and can reduce the prize fund for the other teams if their fees aren't paid. For these reasons, a team that begins a season is held responsible for finishing that season. Although no one can be forced to play, a team that has not withdrawn their roster at least 7 days prior to the start of a season is responsible for the full season's fees. The captain of a drop-out team will not be allowed to play on future M8 teams until all owed fees are paid. Team members are each responsible for 20% of total fees owed.

About M8

M8 Pool Leagues was established in 1989 in Minneapolis MN to provide a fun night out with family & friends. The “Race to Points” format utilizes exceptional player handicapping allowing players of all skill levels to compete for large cash prizes. The “M8 System” is now available to players anywhere in the USA and Canada. For more information, check out our website at **www.M8Pool.com** or call us at **651-636-2022**.