

Official APA Rulings

The following is a compilation of "unique situations" which have occurred during League/Tournament play that required special investigation and ruling interpretation

Category	Question	Ruling
Breaking	Can a person with a broken arm have another person break for them?	No. The person with the broken arm cannot have someone else break for them. They can, however, give up the break and allow the opponent to break. If the opponent does not want the break, the person with the broken arm can use one arm to break as long as they adhere to the rules for a legal break.
Breaking	Can a player give up the break after he/she won the lag?	If the player doesn't want to break, then they should lose the lag. The player will not be given the option to give up the break. If you win the lag – you break.
Breaking	On the break a ball is pocketed, but the cue ball hops up on the rail and remains there pinned between the felt and the wood. Does the shooter (breaker) shoot the cue ball from that position?	No. The cue ball may only be shot from the actual playing surface of the table; in this situation a foul has been committed and ball-in-hand is awarded to the opponent. Anytime the cue ball leaves the playing surface and doesn't return on its own it is a foul that results in BIH to the opponent. Note: This ruling is the same whether or not a ball was pocketed in the process.
Breaking	Can a player place the cue ball frozen to the rail, then shoot the cue ball into the head rail, banking the cue ball into the rack of balls?	No - The cue ball may NOT be shot into a rail before the rack.
Coaching	If a shooter is in shooting position and the coach realizes that the shooter didn't mark the pocket, can the coach grab the marker and mark the pocket that the shooter was aiming at?	<p>Yes, as long as the shooter doesn't change the shot, then it is acceptable for the coach to mark the pocket. It would not matter at that point whether the coach, one of the teammates or even the opponent or one of the opponent's teammates marked the pocket for the shooter. The coach needs to be warned not to do it again or sportsmanship penalties may be given. The situation may determine the ruling. It would not be a foul if the shooter clearly designates which pocket he/she wants marked.</p> <p>If the shooter did not designate which pocket they wanted marked and the coach walked up and marked the pocket, provided the shooter had a coaching timeout remaining in that particular game, a coaching timeout would be considered used.</p> <p>It would be a sportsmanship violation if the shooter did not designate which pocket they wanted marked and the coach walked up and marked the pocket when there was no coaching timeout remaining in that game for the shooter.</p> <p>See Tournament Rulings for further examples</p>
Coaching	Can a coach mark the playing surface with chalk?	Coaches cannot mark the playing surface of the table; this will be handled as a sportsmanship violation.
Coaching	Can a player mark the playing surface with chalk where they want to make contact with a ball?	Yes; however, we do not recommend it and ask that players not do this. Repeat offenders may be subject to a sportsmanship violation.
Coaching	Can a player or his coach place a piece of chalk on the table in an attempt to help the player aim and contact a certain spot on the table?	Yes, a player or coach may place a piece of chalk on the rail to assist in aiming.

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Equipment	Can a mechanical bridge (non-standard, specialty, custom-designed, etc.) be used during competition?	Yes, as long as the bridge conforms to APA equipment rules and is used properly, per APA rules, to execute a legal shot.
Equipment	Can a bridge be used when attempting a jump shot?	Yes, as long as the bridge conforms to APA equipment rules and is used properly, per APA rules, to execute a jump legal shot. The players regular game cue must be used to execute the shot and the bridge may be use as part of this shot.
Equipment	Can a phenolic tip be used on a cue in regular play?	Yes, however we still do not allow jump cues. Although we would allow their (phenolic tip) use, we are unsure as to why someone would want to use one as they are very hard and do not give.
Equipment	Pertaining to the US AM and Masters events, since we allow jump cues, would a player be able to break down their cue and use just the shaft to jump?	We will allow a participant to break down the cue (using just the shaft) to attempt a jump shot.
Equipment	Are junior cues allowed to be used as jump cues?	No, you must use only regular game cues. The only person allowed to use junior cues are little people with special needs. Although we do not have minimum or maximum restrictions on the length or weight of cues (other than it cannot be a "jump" cue), typically regular game cues are 56" to 58" long and between 16 and 21 ounces in weight.
Equipment	Can a team swap out the billiard balls provided by the host location with a set of their own (i.e., decorated, custom-designed, etc.) billiard balls?	No, we would not allow a team to swap out balls unless their opponent agrees to it.
Equipment	Are K-Rest brand bridges allowed?	Yes, K-Rest bridges are allowed in the APA.
Equipment	Is the TrueStroke hand-held bridge allowed?	Yes, the TrueStroke hand-held bridge is allowed in the APA.
Equipment	Is the Amazing Twister (twister tip) cue allowed?	No, this device is not allowed.
Equipment	Is there anywhere in the rule book that says you must use a cue stick to play? Can a player use a broomstick?	No, a player cannot use a broomstick - common sense must always prevail. Players must play with a cue stick.
Equipment	Is the Jump Buddy an approved item?	Yes, this is an approved piece of equipment.

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Fouls	What if a player, in the excitement of an anticipated win, forgets to shoot the cue ball and just hits the 8-Ball directly into the pocket. Is this a foul?	No, it would not be considered a foul since the cue ball was never touched. The 8-Ball should be replaced by the opponent and the shooter shoots again.
Fouls/BIH Situations	Player A, shooting stripes, misses their object ball and makes contact with a solid, resulting in ball-in-hand to the opponent (Player B). Before the cue ball stops rolling, Player B picks it up. Would that be ball-in-hand back to Player A? (Note: If Player A would have allowed the cue ball to continue it may have contacted a small cluster of balls in turn changing the game.)	This would not be a foul unless this happened during a HLT event where a referee was present, and the ref felt that the "incoming" player actually stopped the ball to create a situation that would be "favorable" to them. It could be considered poor sportsmanship, and the player should be told not to do this again, but that would be the maximum penalty unless there are repeated offenses where penalties may be applied.
Fouls/BIH Situations	Player A shoots the wrong category of balls giving Player B ball-in-hand. As Player A picks up the cue ball and rolls it over to player B, it contacts another ball, dropping it into the pocket. Is this a foul?	Place the ball back to its original position (on a coin-op table it would be the responsibility of the shooter (Player A) who dropped the ball to pay for its retrieval) and Player B would still have ball-in-hand.
Fouls/BIH Situations	The player is shooting and accidentally hits another ball with their hand while shooting the cue ball. The player automatically replaces the ball to where it was, but the cue ball comes back and hits this ball. Is it a foul?	Yes, because the moved ball came in contact with the cue ball. Any balls moved accidentally during a shot must be replaced by the opponent after the shot is over and all balls have stopped rolling. Once the ball was moved it should have been left for the opponent to replace when all balls had stopped rolling.
Fouls/BIH Situations	During a match, the shooting player pauses to take a drink and re-chalk their cue. The opponent, thinking it is their turn, steps to the table and shoots. What is the call?	The call is ball-in-hand back to the original shooter. At the point the opponent touched the cue ball it was a foul since it was not their turn at the table. If a ball had been pocketed it would be brought back up to the table as close to the point as it was before it fell.

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Fouls/BIH Situations	The player is on the 8-Ball and is going to shoot a bank shot to kick the 8-Ball into the corner pocket. As the player shoots, their cue accidentally bumps the 8-Ball and the cue ball comes back and pockets the 8-Ball in the corner. Is this a foul?	Yes, the foul has occurred when the cue ball touches the object ball or 8-Ball in its new position. BIH. In this case, since this was the 8-Ball and it was pocketed, it is loss of game.
Fouls/BIH Situations	The player shoots and connects with their object ball and then accidentally hits the opponent's ball with their stick. The opponent's object ball rolls into the same object ball the player originally connected with, causing it to be pocketed. Is this a foul?	No, there is no foul - the pocketed ball stays down, the opponent's moved object ball is replaced, and the shooter continues to shoot.
Fouls/BIH Situations	The player with BIH is walking around the table with the cue ball in their hand and accidentally drops it in a pocket. Is this a foul?	Since the cue ball did not touch an object ball during its course, then the player may pick it back up and continue his/her turn. No foul has occurred.
Fouls/BIH Situations	The player breaks and the cue ball goes onto the floor. The incoming player shoots, but not from behind the head string, and makes a ball. The opponent then tries to call a foul. Is there a foul?	No. The opponent must tell the shooter that the cue ball must be placed behind the head string. If he/she allows the player to shoot from a spot in front of the head string then it is too late to call a foul.
Fouls/BIH Situations	The player with BIH touches another object ball in the course of placing the cue ball with the hand that is holding the cue ball. Is this a foul?	Yes, the hand is an extension of the cue ball in this case. Players need to exercise caution when picking up or placing the cue ball in a BIH situation as the cue ball is always alive. If the cue ball, or the hand holding or moving it, touches another ball it is a cue ball foul and the opponent has BIH.
Fouls/BIH Situations	Can a coach touch the playing surface?	Yes.
Fouls/BIH Situations	What if the coach moves a piece of chalk to the intended contact spot?	During a time-out, the coach can place an object or chalk on the edge (top of the table) to help guide the shooters shot and is not considered a sportsmanship violation. The item used must be common to the table.

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Fouls/BIH Situations	The shooter hits their last shot which is the 8-Ball. It is not pocketed, but rolls to almost a complete stop in the middle of the table; just as it stops, the ball hits the shooter's cue stick. Nothing is pocketed. Is this a foul or ball-in-hand?	Neither; just have the opponent move the ball back where it was.
Fouls/BIH Situations	The cue ball and last remaining object ball are frozen together inside the corner pocket. The cue ball is frozen on one rail, and the object ball is frozen on the other with both balls frozen together. The player shoots the cue ball using extreme (vertical) reverse English into the frozen object ball. The object ball moves a couple of inches and stops, and the cue ball moves away from the rail a few inches. The reverse English then brings the cue ball back to the rail, where it started. Is this a legal shot?	No, this is not a legal shot since the object ball did not hit a rail and the cue ball did not hit a different rail.
Fouls/BIH Situations	In the process of placing the cue ball in a ball-in-hand situation, the player accidentally drops the cue ball, which in turn knocks the 8-Ball into the pocket. What would the ruling be?	It would be ball-in-hand to the opponent and the 8-Ball should be placed as close as possible to its original position. We don't want to penalize the players for an accident. Rules should be looked at in "the spirit of the rule".
Fouls/BIH Situations	After completing a legal shot, the cue ball comes to rest (completely stops) near the edge of a pocket. The player walks away from the table and the cue ball subsequently falls into the pocket. What is the ruling?	This is not a foul and this does not result in ball-in-hand for the opponent. A foul is defined as "an illegal shot resulting in loss of turn at the table and ball-in-hand for the opponent". Ball-in-hand is the term used to describe the advantage granted to your opponent when you scratch or otherwise foul." Since the shot was legal, no foul had been committed. And since the shot was legally executed and play completed, there is no scratch in this situation. Therefore, the cue ball will be placed back to the position (as close as possible, by opponent) it was in before falling into the pocket.

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Fouls/BIH Situations	An opposing player took a ball out of the pocket and used it to measure the space between the balls on the table before taking a shot. Is that legal?	There is nothing that says that this cannot be done. The only caution I would give to a player is to be sure not to foul or move any object balls in the process, as it could be a sportsmanship violation.
Fouls/BIH Situations	If a player is having difficulty making a shot over the top of a ball that is close to the cue ball, can he grab the ball in question and create a bridge while holding the ball?	Yes, if the ball in question is moved, it must be replaced. If it comes in contact with the cue ball it is a foul.
Fouls/BIH Situations	A player takes a shot and legally pockets his ball; however, when he brings his cue backwards, the cue stick rolls over the top of another ball and it goes into a pocket. The cue ball is at the location this mispocketed ball previously occupied. What is the ruling on this if this was the shooter's ball and what if it is the opponent's ball?	This is not a foul; put the ball back as close to its original location.
Fouls/BIH Situations	The player has ball-in-hand in 9-Ball, and in the process of placing the cue ball, it slips out of his/her hand, rolls down and makes the lowest numbered ball. What is the ruling?	The player fouled – count it as dead and the turn moves to the opponent with ball-in-hand.
Game Losing Situation	The shooter has marked the pocket and is shooting the 8-Ball. As the 8-Ball is going into the pocket, the 8-Ball hits the pocket marker. Is this a loss of game?	This is not a loss of game; this will be considered a legal pocketing of the 8-Ball as this is an amateur league and we do not want to take that away from the shooter.
Game Losing Situation	The player is taking a shot – after they stroke, the butt of their cue hits the 8-Ball, which is hanging in the pocket and it falls in. Is this loss of game?	NO. The 8-Ball, which is not in motion due to a normal shot, fell due to outside forces. It would be brought back to the table and placed in the position it was prior to being knocked in. It would only be a loss if it fell in as a result of a shot and does not mean accidentally "knocking" the ball in with outside force (i.e., due to bridge, shirtsleeve, etc.).

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Game Losing Situation	The player is shooting the 8-Ball, picks up a marker off a table, and marks the pocket in which they are attempting to pocket the 8-Ball. After making the ball, their opponent says it is loss of game as there was another marker on the table at a different pocket. Is this a loss of game?	This is not a loss of game. If it was obvious which pocket the player was shooting at, and everyone watched them mark the pocket, there is no question that the other marker would be irrelevant at that point. Remember: win at the table and not from the chair.
Game Losing Situation	What if the cue ball is touched prior to coming to a complete stop (after pocketing the 8-Ball)? Has a foul been committed and would the game be awarded to the opponent?	Yes, and it would result in loss of game at the National level (see note below) or if a League Operator has it contained in his local bylaws. However, if the opposing player does not object and does not call it as a loss, and it is not against local bylaws, it may be allowed at the local level. Note: Each situation will have to be considered on a case by case basis. Common sense and the "spirit of the rule" must prevail. In general, if the cue ball is not going into or near a pocket (no chance for cue ball to scratch), then it will NOT be a loss of game. We do not want to penalize a player for stopping the cue ball or picking it up due to excitement or celebration.
Game Losing Situation	The player touches and alters the course of the cue ball in a game losing situation. What happens next?	If the shooting team claims it was not going in a pocket, and therefore not a game losing situation, but the sitting team says it was, then we would rule in favor of the sitting team.
Game Losing Situation	My opponent scratched on the 8-Ball; not realizing this (not paying attention), I picked up the cue ball and placed it where I wanted it and shot my next shot. I then realized that I had already won the match by my opponent's scratching on the 8-Ball. My opponent's team and my opponent knew they had lost the match when the 8-Ball was scratched but did not say anything. I know I should not have shot again, and I was stupid for doing that. Do I have any recourse in this matter?	Yes. The person who scratched on the 8-Ball should receive a loss of that game for that particular game. A loss is a loss and just because someone didn't notice it doesn't negate this fact. The opposing team should be reprimanded for bad sportsmanship.

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Game Losing Situation	Player A shoots and misses. Player B calls a time out. After the time out Player A shoots again (which happens to be the 8- Ball). He makes the 8-Ball. The other team did not notice. A spectator points out that Player A has just shot twice in a row. Everyone agrees that this is what happened. Is this a loss of game?	It is the opponent's responsibility to make sure the rotation is correct. First offense – sportsmanship violation, Second offense – ball in hand. If the second infraction is on the 8-Ball it will be considered loss of game and treated like any other foul when shooting the 8.
General Rules	The player takes the butt of their cue stick and hits the points on the pocket several times so that they could run the object ball down the rail. Is this a foul?	No.
General Rules	Can a player get help with the bridge?	The coach is allowed to place the bridge for a player during a time-out and it must be done with caution; if the bridge makes contact with the cue ball it is a ball-in-hand rule. However, it is possible for a League Operator to have a by-law prohibiting the coach from placing the bridge.
General Rules	The player has a stick with two shafts - one for breaking and one for shooting. Can he/she break with the break shaft, and then change shafts to shoot?	This is OK. However, if time becomes a problem, he/she would have to wait until it was not his/her turn to switch shafts.
General Rules	Can a "little person" (dwarf) be allowed to use a stool to play in the league?	Yes, provided that the player is a genuine "little person" and that they are able to move the stool themselves and keep both feet on the stool.
General Rules	Can office staff participate in another League area?	The deciding factor of office staff participating in another League area is up to the LOs involved. However, they would still not be allowed to participate in HLT, Team or Singles tournaments or championships.
General Rules - 9 Ball	There is a stalemate in a 9-Ball game. What happens?	The game ends but the points earned stand, the innings remain, as do defensive shots, and the remaining balls become dead balls. The player who broke in the stalemated game breaks in the new game. The reasoning is that in 8-Ball, wins are by games, so no one wins in a stalemated game, but in 9-Ball it is by points, so everything up to the point of the game being stalemated should stand.
General Rules - 9 Ball	Can a player state to another player that "they only need 1 more point" in a 9-Ball game?	This is perfectly acceptable as it is related to the status of game. It is also okay to tell someone they need 3 or 4 points as it all relates to status and not situation.

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Legal Shot	Is the "Tricky Close End Rail Safety" a legal hit? (In this shot, the cue ball and object ball are close to each other and just off the end rail at the center diamond. If you try to stroke directly into the object ball, you have a possibility of fouling by double hitting the cue ball since both balls are so close together. Also you virtually have to climb up on the table to reach this shot or use a bridge. None of these are good options. The way to execute this shot is very simple: Lay your cue stick on the table and slide the tip under the edge of the cue ball. Be sure the tip does not contact the cue ball. Now grip the cue stick about 3 inches from the tip with your thumb and two fingers. Pull the stick straight up and the tip will contact the edge of the cue ball driving it forward into the object ball. There is no possibility of a double hit on the cue ball with this method. The object ball will then rebound from the rail and strike the cue ball leaving virtually the same shot all over again. This shot requires very little practice.)	Yes, this is a legal hit.
Tournament	Can common players coach if they have not yet selected a team to actually play on?	No, common players and/or ineligible players are not allowed to participate as a coach; follow penalty levels for violations. This does not mean that exceptions won't be granted if asked locally; however, no exceptions will be granted nationally.
Tournament	Can a team have a company sponsor them and use their shirts for advertising?	Yes, we do allow teams to have company sponsors, however, they must have a signed release and follow the dress code for the event. They would NOT be eligible for the Team Shirt contest with the company info on the shirts.

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Tournament	Can 18-year old junior players play in the MiniMania Tournaments?	Yes, we will allow any juniors that just turned 18 to go ahead and play but we will not allow any juniors under 18 to play. If a player needs a new card we will have to see their ID first; this way we can verify their birth date and we won't print cards for junior members that are not old enough to "upgrade".
Tournament	What is our policy on active military personnel in regards to the rule that a player must play four times with his/her team in the spring keep their eligibility?	We will evaluate each case on an individual basis.
Tournament	How many points are individual 9-Ball match forfeits worth?	Individual forfeits for LTC & NTC are worth 20 points. For regular weekly league play, individual forfeits are worth 15 points.
Tournament	What if neither team ends up with 51?	The team with the most points wins the match and advances.
Tournament	At Nationals, when it comes to slow play, do you typically implement the shot clock or do you go by penalty phases?	We use the shot clock to verify that they are taking over the allotted time limit. We warn players of the penalties of slow play by stating to them that "you don't want to give your opponent ball-in-hand". If necessary we could go to the extent of using the shot clock.
Tournament	Can ineligible players coach at the LTC or NTC?	No, ineligible players are not allowed to participate as a coach; follow penalty levels for violations.
Tournament	Can players use lighted or flashing cues?	No. Lighted and flashing cues will not be allowed at any HLT's. They may not be distracting to the opponent while shooting, but could be very distracting to other participants playing on nearby tables in an event.
Tournament	At Nationals, if someone hit their object ball and the opponent's object ball simultaneously, is this considered a good or bad hit?	If it appears it is a simultaneous hit, meaning you cannot tell which ball was struck first, then it would be a GOOD hit as the call goes to the shooter.
Tournament	When certifying themselves at NSC or NTC, should a player certify the same SL as they are locally or can they list a lower SL?	A player should certify themselves to what they believe their ability really is. Use good judgment and remember that if they go up during the tournament, it will count against them.

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Tournament (Coaching)	Player (A) calls the referee over and explains that the opponent (Player B) was getting ready to shoot the 8-Ball when someone from Player B's team yells, "Don't forget to mark your pocket" and stands up with the marker in their hand. The shooter (Player B) asks his teammate to place the marker at the opposite corner of the table from where he is standing and then proceeds to shoot the 8-Ball into the marked pocket. Player A wants a ruling. What is the ruling?	The referee should ask the following before ruling: "Did the shooter (Player B) clearly state where he wanted the marker placed?" "Did you (Player A) know where the shooter (Player B) was going to shoot the 8-Ball?" If the answer to either of the questions is YES, then the call is in favor of Player B and a game win for the shooter.
Tournament (Coaching)	Player A calls the referee over and explains that the opponent (Player B) was getting ready to shoot the 8-Ball when their coach walks up to the table and places the marker at the pocket the coach expects the 8-Ball to enter. The shooter (Player B) did not ask the coach to place the marker or designate which pocket he intended to make the 8-Ball in. The shooter (Player B) has not used any timeout(s) for this game.	Answer – The referee should rule this as using a timeout.