For Those Interested In Pool…

Eight-ball is the most well-known pocket billiards game in the world. However, it also has the most varying set of rules of any game. Compared to football, tennis, and even golf, cue sports as a whole is not recognized as a popular sport in the U.S. The lack of media coverage results in a loose word-of-mouth education of the game that varies from region to region.

Many may not know that there does exist a World Standardized set of rules for eight-ball, as well as many other pool games. Governed by the **World Pool-Billiard Association** (**www.wpa-pool.com**), the common core, the **General Rules of Play**, is used in tournaments, leagues, and professional competitions throughout the world.

Some important contradictions to **bar-room rules** are listed below

- STANDARD CALL SHOT (1.6)

The intended ball and pocket must be indicated (if not obvious) for each shot. **Details of the shot, such as cushions struck or other balls contacted or pocketed are irrelevant**. Only one ball may be called on each shot. Turn passes to the opponent on failure to pocket the intended ball.

- **BALL IN HAND** (1.5)

The shooter may place the cue ball **anywhere** on the table (not limited to behind the head string).

- ALL FOULS RESULT IN **BALL IN HAND** (3.9)

If the shooter commits a foul, play passes to his opponent with **ball in hand**. Scratches are fouls.

- **FOUL**: WRONG BALL FIRST (6.2)

It is a foul for the cue ball to **first** contact any other ball except the shooter's object ball(s).

- **FOUL**: NO RAIL AFTER CONTACT (6.3)

The cue ball must **first** contact an object ball, **and then** at least one ball (cue ball or any object ball) must be driven into a **rail** or **pocket**. Otherwise the shot is a foul.

I'VE NEVER HEARD OF THIS. WHY SHOULD I PLAY THIS WAY?

Pocketing balls **is not always as important** as cue ball position. Its often to your advantage **NOT to sink one of your balls** (maybe its blocking your opponent or you simply don't have a good shot). Blasting away at balls and using blind luck in hope that you'll get another clean shot is a guaranteed way to lose control of the table, and the game.

Instead, try to leave the cue ball in a place where your opponent doesn't have a good shot either. This is the defensive aspect of pool, and like any other game, is vital. **Purely offensive players are missing out!**

Bar-room rules do not enforce penalties for fouls, so players can simply tap the cue ball a few inches and leave no shot for the opponent. WPA rules ensure that both pocketing of balls and safety shots are fair. It also prevents arguments, demands better cue ball control, and will help you become a better player. For any questions, please visit **www.wpa-pool.com, www.poolplayers.com,** and **www.azbilliards.com**. Play smart!