

Pool - Overview

Pool comes under the category of cue sports. It is also known **pocket billiards**. The sport is famous for its royal style playing signature. There will be hardly any country in the world where this amazing sport is not famous. Through this tutorial, we will try to understand this sport in a better way.



Pool is played on a table where six pockets are there along with the rails. The aim is to hit the balls with the cue to put them inside the pockets. The sport is divided in to different categories with different set of rules.

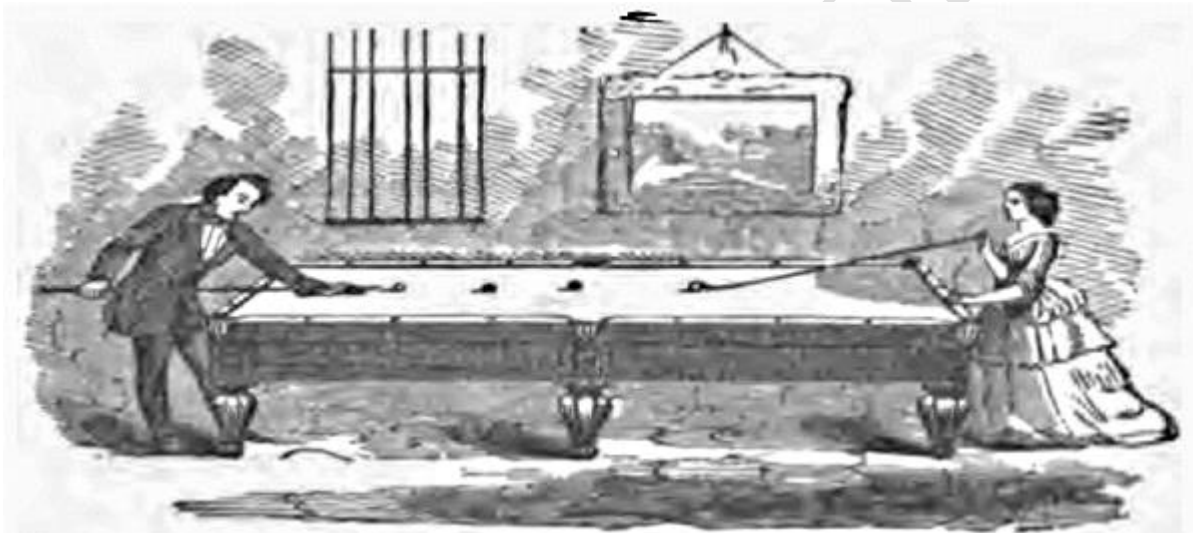


A Brief History of Pool

Cue sports have a history of more than 200 years. The billiards once was called as **winning and losing crumble games**. The English billiards association, which was formed in the UK in 1885, was the first governing body of the sport.

In the earlier days, the cue ball is made out of wood and clay but it was not strong enough and also not long lasting in nature. It was initially strong and comfortable to play but after some match there is break on its surface. So the idea of making cue balls from wood and clay changed and the material for making the ball shifted to ivory.

Ivory was made from elephant tusks and it was very beautiful and strong. This game is meant for the rich society, so they can afford ivory made balls. In a few years. thousands of elephants were slaughtered and their tusks were stolen and traded. Consequently different government and wise people appealed against it and making balls from ivory was stopped.



Nowadays, the balls are being made of plastic because it is durable, beautiful, and most importantly, it is affordable. In earlier days, only the rich could afford to play Pool, but now, anyone can try a hand in this beautiful sport.

Participating Countries

World Pool Billiards Association is the governing body of this sport. The sport is played under both men's and women's category. Since its inception, the sport has become popular in many countries. The first world championships was held in 1990 at Bergheim, Germany. The top-five countries dominating in this sport with the highest number of medals include – Philippines, Japan, Great Britain, United States, and China.

Pool Vs. Snooker Vs. Billiards

Pool, Snooker, and Billiards are cue sports which are played on a table having pockets. The main objective is to send the balls to the pockets. There are many differences between all the three which are as follows –

Snooker

In snooker, 22 balls are used which include one cue ball, 15 red balls, Along with the table has one ball each of yellow, brown, blue, pink, black and green colors. In this sport, a player has to pot one red ball and one colored ball.

The winner is decided on the basis of the number of points. A player will score one point by potting the red ball. Then he has to shoot the colored ball from least valued ball to the most valued ball. The player has to shoot least valued ball first and then move to the next valued ball.

Billiards

In Billiards, only three balls are used whose colors are white, yellow, and red. The white and yellow balls can be used as cue balls. Billiards is played either between two individuals or two teams. The players have to string in order to decide who will start the match.

Points are awarded through cannon, winning hazard, and losing hazard –

- In cannon, the cue ball is hit in order to hit the other cue ball and then the red ball two points will be scored.
- In winning hazard, a player has to pot the red ball and in this case three points are scored.
- In losing hazard, a player can score in the following conditions –
 - If he hits another cue ball which hits the red ball and pot it three points will be scored.
 - If the red ball is hit first and then the other cue ball, then two points are scored.
 - If the other cue ball is hit and then the red ball and the red ball is not potted, two points are scored.
 - If the red and the other cue ball hit simultaneously, then two points are scored.

Pool

Pool has different variants and based on that number of balls are declared. In eight-ball pool there are 15 balls, in nine-ball pool, there are nine balls and in three-ball pool, there are three balls.

After the first shot (called **break**), the players have to choose whether to play with solid colored balls or striped colored balls. After potting either of the seven balls, the 8 ball has to be potted.

An individual can win if –

- he pots the 8 ball legally after potting all the seven balls.
- the opponent illegally pots the 8 ball.
- 8 ball is knocked off the table.

Pool - Equipment

Pool was originated in Great Britain. It is also formally known as **pool billiards** or **pocket billiards**. This is an indoor sport and played on a pool table. The table has six holes along the sides which are also called as **receptacles** or **pockets**. The main goal of the sport is to strike the balls into the receptacles. In this chapter we will discuss about the equipment of this sport.

Balls

The cue sports mainly depend on balls. There are normally three types of cue sports which are pool, snooker, and billiards. In each sport, different number of balls are used.

Rack

A rack is normally triangle in shape. It is used both in snooker and pool. If we are having an eight-ball pool, we can use a triangle rack and if we play a nine-ball pool, then the shape of rack will be of diamond shape. When the game starts, the rack is removed from the table.

Cue

Cue is a stick used to hit the ball. The length of the cue stick is around 55 inches. There is no fixed length as some cue sticks are around 58 inches. The taper down the tip is 0.5 inch. However, in case of snooker, the tip of the cue is normally smaller in comparison.



Bridge

Bridge is also called a **rake** and is used sometimes as a supporting instrument for the cue stick. At some point of time during the match, the ball may be far away from the player to take a shot. At this time the player uses bridge as a support which makes it easier for him to play a shot.

Chalk

Like the bridge, chalk is also not important equipment. It is optional for a player to use it. Chalk is rubbed on the tip of the cue stick. Normally, before every shot, a player rubs the tip with chalk to increase the friction between the tip and the ball in order to increase the hitting efficiency.

Table

The table used for pool is a six pocket table, or we can say six hole table. The pockets are four in four corners and two pockets are in the middle of the two lengths of the table. The table is rectangular in shape having a length of 2.75 metres and breadth of 1.37 metres.

Pool - How to Play?

As we know that there are three types of cue sports snooker, billiards and pool and in each type the colour and size of the balls differs. Normally the diameter of the ball is 2.5 inches which is used in pool.

With the traditional cue ball in white, there are two types of object balls. The two sets include **seven striped number balls** and **seven solid coloured number balls**. There is also a ball having number eight in white and the rest in black. This ball is called as a **black eight-ball**.



There are other balls whose colour is in yellow, blue, red, purple, brown, orange and green. Unlike pool, billiards require only three balls. One is the traditional white ball, one is a red object ball and one is either yellow or white with a black or red dot. Among these, two are cue balls.

There are different variants of pool having different sets of rules. These variants are as follows –

- Eight-ball Pool
- Nine-ball Pool
- Three-ball Pool
- One-pocket Pool

Let us now take a look at the rules of each of these variants of Pool.

Eight-Ball Pool

Eight-ball pool is a favourite cue ball sport played in United States of America. It is commonly played in pubs in the United Kingdom. It is also a famous sporting event and competitively played in leagues both in the western part of Africa and the eastern part of North and South America.



First the balls are arranged in a triangular shape by a triangular rack with a full rack of fifteen balls. The striker has a cue ball. The aim of the striker is to legally pocket eight balls before his opponent does. The strategy, style, rule in eight ball game varies from tournament to tournament and from country to country.

Nine-Ball Pool

Nine-ball Pool is the mostly played as a professional sport. There are nine balls on the table numbered from 1 to 9 and there is a cue ball for the striker. Nine ball sport is played on rotation basis. The serving player means the player who has the strike must make legal contact to the ball which has the lowest number. The game is won by the player who legally pockets all the nine balls.



Three-Ball Pool

In a three-ball pool match, the serving player continues to serve till all the balls are pocketed. The player who pockets all the balls in fewest attempts emerges as winner. This game can also be played by two or more players.



One-Pocket Pool

In one-pocket pool, only two players are involved. One-pocket is a strategic game and one of the trickiest game. Here each striker is assigned with only one corner of

the table and he can pocket the ball only in that corner. The winner will be that player who pockets majority of the balls normally 8 balls.



One-pocket ball is one of the trickiest games in pool, as an accomplished opponent normally likes to place the balls near his own pocket without pocketing them. So, the other contestant has to be defensive in his approach.

Bank Pool

Bank pool is normally played with nine balls. Sometimes it is also played with a full rack means 15 balls. If there are nine balls then the player pocketing five balls wins and in a full rack the player who pockets eight balls is victorious. The ball racked in nine ball or fifteen ball is not racked in particular order. In recent days, bank pool is becoming very popular among the players because it can be played with either nine balls or fifteen balls and it can be a match of long duration.

Pool - Rules

The rules of the pool are governed by WPA (World Pool Billiard Association). Only basic knowledge is not going to help you much in Pool Billiard, until you know the following important rules –

- The table on which game is played will be covered with cloth and it will be surrounded by cushion boundary.
- **Lag** is known as the first shot of the match. The winner of this will be the deciding authority about who will hit first.
- A lag shot is not good, if the ball of the shooter

- touches the side of the cushion
- passes the long string
- makes contact with the side of the cushion
- During the course of the match, a player can switch the cue stick as per his wish.
- To improve the hand function, one is allowed to use the gloves.



- With the suggestion of referee, one can use powder.
- To make a perfect shot, one can take the help of a mechanical bridge to support the cue stick.
- To save the tip of the cue, one is allowed to use **chalks**.
- While placing the balls back on the table, one can always take the help of long strings.
- If the player has cue ball in his hand, he is allowed to place it anywhere on the surface.
- In case of **call shots**, the shooter has to tell the ball and indicate the pocket well in advance.
- When the balls are misplaced, it is the referee who will place the ball in their right places.

Pool - Champions

World pool and billiard association is the highest governing body of Pool Billiards that is organized all over the world. Apart from this, all participating nations have their own governing bodies too, that decide the rules for Pool.



Here is a list of some of the important internationally recognized championships for Pool and Billiards.

- World Billiards Championships
- US Open 9 Ball Championships
- US Amateur Championships
- The Dynamic Billiard European Championships
- PBSA National 8 Ball Championships

Let us now discuss briefly about some of the champions of this game and their careers.

Mick Hill



Mick Hill is a pool player from England who has won WEPF Eight-ball Pool in 2004, 2010, and 2015. Mick debuted in this sport from Dudley and in 1996, he was

selected in English Junior team for European Championships. The team won a bronze medal in the championship.

In July 2010, he won World Eight-ball Pool Federation World Championship. In 2015, he defeated Nigel Clarke in the World Championship. He also participated in 2016 World Championship in China but lost in the final.

Dennis Orcollo



Dennis Orcollo is a pool player from Philippines. He started playing and practicing pool at the age of eight and in 2002, he participated in WPA World Nine-ball Championship and attained 17th rank.

In 2006, he won many tournaments in USA which include Reno Open, Hard Times Nine-ball Tournament, and two bar table events. In the same year, he won World Pool League Tournament.

In 2007, he lost the final of WPA World Eight-ball Championship but won the same event in 2011. In 2016, he won US Open Straight Pool Championship.

Ronato Alcano



Ronato Alcano is a pool player from Philippines. He started his career through Rising Stars Tournament. He lost in the finals of the tournament but gave a tough fight to the opponent Edgar Acaba. In 2002, he won five tournaments in Joss Tour. In 2005, he won Manila Tournament during WPA Asian Nine-ball Tour.

In the same tour he also qualified for World Championship. In 2006, he won WPA Men's World Nine-ball Championship. Alcano won WPA World Eight-ball Championship in which he defeated Dennis Orcollo. In the same year, he participated in Philippine Nine-ball Open and ranked second.

Niels Feijen



Niels Feijen is a pool player from Netherlands. In 2001, Feijen participated in a nine ball tournament held in Tokyo but lost in the final.

Feijen won Skins Billiards Championship in 2004. He also participated in European Straight Pool Championship and won it five times.

In 2005, he won Big Apple Nine-ball Classic Championship and in 2007, he won International Challenge of Champions. In 2010, he won World Straight Pool Championship and WPA World Ten-ball Championship.