

Snooker - Overview

Snooker is a sport played on a table covered with a green cloth or (baize), with pockets at each of the four corners and in the inner of each of the long side cushions. Snooker is commonly regarded as having been invented in India by British Army officers and is widely held in many of the English-speaking and Commonwealth countries.



A Brief History of Snooker

Snooker was invented in 19th century by changing some rules in billiards. In billiards only red balls are used while in snooker colored balls are also used besides the red balls. Sir Neville Chamberlain finalized the rules in 1884. The word **snooker** came into light when one of the opponents of Chamberlain failed to pocket a ball and was called a **snooker** by Chamberlain.

Snooker became popular in England and later on, various clubs were made to play the sport. The first World Snooker Championship was held in 1927 and its organiser was Joe Davis. Before his retirement he won the World Championship in 1946.

In 1969, David Attenborough organised Pot Black snooker tournament which included multi colored balls and green table. He did this for the demonstration of

a colored television. In 1978, World Snooker Championship was telecasted on television.

Participating Countries

Snooker is one of those popular sports that is played in almost every corner of the world. The sport is often treated as royal sport too. The sport was originated in India (during the British rule) but soon after that it got widespread all over the world. Now every country has their individual snooker governing bodies to ensure fair play of this sport.

The countries where the sport is popular include: England, Canada, Wales, Australia, India, Ireland, Scotland, and China.

Snooker - Equipment

The playing environment for snooker should be a closed room with a snooker table placed in the center. Sufficient illumination is casted on the table from the above and all other lights remain switched off till the match ends to facilitate the players in playing the sport.

The match requires instant strategy formation and correct approach during the shot, so that you can score more points with minimum number of attempts. That is the reason it is ensured that the room should be free from any outside or random noise. Players are given a healthy atmosphere so that they can perform their best.

As snooker is a cue sport, it is necessary that all the equipment used for this purpose should be compliant with IOC (International Olympic Committee) standards and should be robust and comfortable to enhance the performance of the players. In this chapter we will be dealing with the equipment used in this sport.

Table

The playing surface should be 11 feet 8.5 inches by 5 feet 10 inches. The table consists of six pockets one pocket each at the corner and two at the center of the longer side.

Cloth

The cloth spread on the table is woollen having a directional nap and a black ball spot. Directional nap is brushed and ironed in the direction from baulk to the top end. The nap affects the direction of the cue ball which depends on shooting direction of the ball.



Balls

There are 22 balls on the table which include 15 red, 6 colour balls and a white cue ball. The size of each ball is 52.5mm. Each color has different points which are as follows –

- The yellow ball has two points
- The green ball has three points
- The brown ball has four points
- The blue ball has five points
- The pink ball has six points
- The black ball has seven points

Cue

Cue is a stick made up of wood or fibreglass and tapered to a tip ending in leather. The cue is used to hit the cue ball in order to pocket the other balls.

Triangle/Rack

The triangle is used for collecting the red balls into the formation essential for the break to start a frame.

Half Butt

Half butt is a combination of cue and table length rest which is used when the cue ball is at a position where entire length of the table has to be used to strike it.

Rest

Rest is a stick with an X-shaped head that is used to hold the cue when the cue ball is out of reach.

Ball marker

Ball marker is a D-shaped notch which is used by a referee who can mark the position of the ball by placing the marker.

Snooker - How to Play?

Potting Red Balls

The objective of the sport is to score more points than one's opponent by shooting and pocketing the object balls in the correct order. At the jolt of a frame, the balls are positioned and the players hit it by striking the cue ball with the tip of the cue. Their goal is to pot one of the red balls into a pocket to score points. If pocketing a ball is not possible then the player has to shoot a ball without making a foul. If the striker pots a red ball, he or she must shoot one of the six colored ball excluding the red ball.



After that, the player must shoot another red ball, then another colour, and so on. This process remains until the striker fails to shoot the desired ball. At this point the opponent comes forward for playing the next shot. If the colored balls have been potted but red balls are still remaining, then the colored balls are resumed and put at the proper places.

Potting Colored Balls

The match is played till all the reds are potted and only six colored balls are there on the table. At this point, the colored balls should be potted in the order from least to most valued ball – that is, yellow first which gives, two points, then green which gives three points, brown which gives four points, blue which gives five points, pink which gives six points and finally black to seven points.

Winner

When the final ball is potted, the player with more points wins. If the scores stand equal and all the balls have been potted, the black is positioned back on its spot as a tiebreaker. A player can also compromise a frame while on strike if he or she considers there are not sufficient points available on the table to beat the challenger's score. In professional snooker, this is a usual occurrence.

Scoring

A player also gets points when his opponent commits a foul. A foul can occur for various reasons. The foul occurs if a player fails to hit the correct ball e.g. striking a color first when the player has to hit a red, or for shooting the cue ball into pocket.

The former may occur when the player is unsuccessful to escape from **a snooker**, a position in which the previous player leaves the cue ball placed in such a way that no legal ball can be hit directly without touching an illegal ball. Points earned from a foul vary from a minimum of four, to a maximum of seven if the black ball is involved.

The total number of successive points (excluding fouls) that a player accrues during one visit to the table is known as a **break**. A player getting a break of 15, for example, have reached it by hitting a red then a black, then a red then a pink, before deteriorating to pot the next red. The customary maximum break in snooker is achieved by potting all reds with blacks then all colors, yielding **147 points**.



The highest possible break is a 155 break, commonly known as a **super maximum**. This is achieved via the opponent leaving a free ball with the black being sealed as the additional color, and then potting 15 reds and blacks with the colors. A great player, Jamie Cope has the merit of being the first player in snooker history to post a confirmed 155 break and achieved it in a training frame in 2005.

A complete match has pre-arranged number of frames and the winner is the one who wins most of the frames. A player has to win minimum five frames to win a match, which is called **best of nine** as that is the maximum possible number of frames.



The final tournament can be of best of 17 or best of 19, while the world tournaments have longer duration of matches stretching from best of 19 in the qualifiers to the first round up to 35 frames in length, first to 18, and is played over two days. It can be extended if required until a winner is determined.

Snooker - Rules

World professional billiards and snooker association (WPBSA) creates the rules and set guidelines to play snooker. All the matches are played by abiding these rules. Below are some important rules that a beginner should know.

- A legitimately potted ball gives the right to the striker to continue at the table until he fails to officially pot a ball.
- It is not essential to cause the cue ball or an object ball to touch the cushion or drop in a pocket after the cue ball has made contact with a legal object ball. If the cue ball failed to make contact with a legal object ball first, it will be considered as a foul.
- As long as red balls are on the table, the striker always have a red as his lawful object ball.
- Any of the red balls potted on a legitimate shot are lawfully potted balls. The striker doesn't need to call any particular red balls, pockets or details of how the pot will be played.
- When the striker have a red ball as his ball as a legal object, he must ground the cue ball's first contact to be with a red ball. If he fails to do so it is a foul.

- After the striker has notched a red ball initially, his next legitimate object is a color. As long as the reds remain on the table, he must substitute his play between reds and colors. When reds are kept on the table and a color is the target, the striker must first designate prior to striking which color ball is his object, and secondly, grounds the cue ball's first contact with a ball to be with particular colored ball. If the striker fails to meet these expectations, it will be a foul.
- If the striker has to pot a red ball and he pots a color, it will be considered as a foul.
- If the striker has to pot a colored ball and he pots red ball, it will be considered as a foul.
- Jump shots are illegitimate in International Snooker. It is a foul if the striker deliberately causes the cue ball to jump, by any means.
- As the red balls remain on the table, each potted color is spotted prior to the next strike. If the striker plays while a ball is wrongly marked, the shot is taken as a foul. If the striker plays two strokes after such error, he is free of penalty if the opponent or referee do not obstruct. He can continue playing and scoring usually as though the spotting error simply had not happened.
- When no reds are left on the table, the colored balls becomes the target of a striker in arising numerical order (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7). These legally potted colors are not marked after each is potted.

Snooker - Points to Remember

The players have to keep in mind the following points before playing snooker.

Practice

You should play every day. Always try to have one day in a week, but there is a need of doing a lot of training and practice.

Play with people

There must be new challenging things to make proper improvement. Try to go to tournaments which will be a great way to meet and play with more players. Remember, the better your opponents, the more you will improve.

Take Setbacks as learning

As you see development in snooker you will also face a hell of a lot of knocks, but if you keep ongoing, this will make you stronger. When you start out, you get beaten regularly, but in the long run these setbacks will only make you more experienced and stronger. You steadily get better and start rising because you know what to expect.

Improving Your Long Potting

There are so many long potting routines you can work at. Try to pot as many as you can in a row to develop your accuracy.

Shatter the Red balls to Work

Being capable to catch the cue ball into the right position for your next shot comes from experience. The more you play, the more charged on you are

Practicing cannons is a unique way to get used to something good to happen. You can also try going for the pack of reds to expect where they're going to open and give yourself an opportunity to break.

Super Safety Shots

To practice playing safe, pull a line at the back of the table and assume it as a target. Play thin off a red and try to get the cue ball back in behind the line. It might be tricky at first, but you'll get close and ultimately start to get it in more often.

Clear all the Colors

Try to clear all the colors regularly. There will be times in matches where you've to clear the table to watch out the frame.

The T Exercise

There are lots of useful line-ups that are really good to practice. There is one exercise called a T exercise, where you put the reds in a T shape and try to pot every ball minimum four times without missing. That works on your concentration level. If you've done it three times and you miss on the fourth attempt, it's a bit stripping because you've got to start all over again.

Pool Helps with Angles

Pool is great for working for your angles which will help you.

Relax Before a Match

Before a match, try to get on the table to have ten minutes warm-up, to get used to the surface and getting your cueing arm in flow. To get focused and collect my thoughts, either with help of coach or by own.

Keep Fit

Keep yourself fit throughout the time as this will motivate you and increase confidence in yourself.

Snooker - Champions

World Professional Billiards and Snooker Association (WPBSA) is the governing body of snooker and is responsible for organising various championships all over the world. Some popular championships of this sport are as follows –

- World Snooker Championships
- Asian Games
- Betfred World Snooker Championship
- Championship League Snooker
- World Open Championship
- Riga Masters Championship
- Indian Open Championship
- Shanghai Masters
- European Championships
- English Open Championship

In this chapter, we will provide a brief description of some of the champions of snooker.

Joe Davis



Joe Davis was born on 15th April 1901 and he represented England in this sport. He entered into this sport in the year 1919 and remained active till 1964. His highest break was 147 and century break was 687.

He had won 22 major tournaments and has participated in World Championship from 1927-1946 in which he won 15 championships.

He died on 10th July 1978 at the age of 77 in Hampshire.

Fred Davis



Fred Davis was born on 14th August 1913 and he represented England in this sport. He entered into this sport in the year 1929 and remained active till 1993. His highest break was 140 and century break was 24.

He had won 10 major tournaments and has participated in many world championships in which he won three championships. He died on 16th April 1998 at the age of 84 in Derbyshire.

Ronnie O’Sullivan



Ronnie O’Sullivan was born on 5th December 1975 and he represents England in this sport. He entered into this sport in the year 1992 and actively participates in this sport. His highest break till now is 147 and century break is 824.

His current global ranking is 10 (as per 1st August 2016) and has participated in many world championships out of which he won five championships (2001, 2004, 2008, 2012, and 2013).

Mark Selby



Mark Selby was born on 19th June 1983 and he represents England in this sport.

He entered into this sport in the year 1999 and actively participates in this sport. His highest break till now is 147 and century break is 420.

His current global ranking is 1(as per 1st august 2016) and has participated in many world championships out of which he won three championships (2014, 2015, and 2016).

Ding Junhui



Ding Junhui was born on 1st April 1987 and he represents China in this sport. He entered into this sport in the year 2003 and actively participates in this sport. In 2005, he won China Open and UK Championship.

In 2006, he won Northern Ireland Trophy. He again won China Open in 2014. His highest break till now is 147 and century break is 417. His current global ranking is 9(as per 1st August 2016) and has bagged five gold medals from Asian Games.

Reanne Evans



Reanne Evans was born on 25th October 1985 and she represents England in this sport. She entered into this sport in the year 2010 and actively participates in this sport. Her highest break till now is 140 and century break is 2.

In between 2005 to 2014, she won the WLBSA Ladies World Snooker Championship 10 times. She also participated in the main professional snooker tour but was unable to win any match. In 2013, she qualified for Wuxi Classic and reach the finals of a snooker tournament.

Allison Fisher



Allison Fisher was born on 24th February 1968 and she represents England in this sport. She entered into this sport in the year 1991 and actively participates in this sport. Her highest break till now is 133 and century break is 11.

She is playing snooker from the age of seven and won her first title at the age of 17. Currently, she is the winner of 80 national and 11 world titles. In 2009, her name was entered in Billiard Congress of America Hall of Fame.

Ng On Yee



Ng On Yee was born on 17th November 1990 and she represents Hong Kong in this sport. She won gold medal in 2010 Guangzhou's Asian Games in team category and bronze under single category.

She also won IBSF snooker championship in 2009. In 2015 she won became world ladies champion by defeating Emma Bonney. In the same year, she defeated Vidya Pillai and won World 6 Reds title.

Karen Corr



Karen Corr was born on 10th November 1969 and she is represents Ireland in this sport. She entered into this sport in the year 1990 and actively participates in the sport.

In the year 2012, she was inducted into BCA Hall of Fame. She has won International Championship at Uncasville consecutively three times from 2006 to 2008.

She started playing snooker at the age of 14 and played her first tournament at the age of 15. She won her Women's World Snooker Championship at the age of 21 and continued winning it in 1991, 1995, and 1996. She also participated in WBPB events.