

Nine Ball Billiards

Generations of barroom athletes have enjoyed billiards as contests of skill. Whether you play for fun in the local pub, or play for keeps on the professional circuit, there are many variations to keep you and your friends entertained. Nine Ball billiards is one favorite take on the age-old game.

Nine Ball billiards is a contest of skill and a test of concentration. This is because in Nine Ball, each player must be mindful of every ball that's on the table. Rather than simply focusing on a group of specific balls, Nine Ball requires that all players begin each shot with the cue ball striking the lowest numbered ball on the table. As long as that happens, the player is free to pocket any ball to keep his or her turn in play. In theory, the first shot should contact the one ball and all shots should initially contact the lowest number until that nine ball is finally pocketed.

A major variation of the basic billiards game play is that only balls played are those numbered one through nine, and the balls are racked in a diamond shape as opposed to the traditional triangle. Most of the balls can be set randomly within the diamond, however the one ball must be at the tip and the nine ball must be at the center. When the balls have been properly set, play begins as usually with the cue ball set behind the head string.

Upon breaking, the shooter must either pocket one ball or send four balls to the rails, to continue in his or her turn. If the breaking shooter should pocket the cue ball or knock a ball off of the table, the shot is lost. The opponent re-spots the ball and begins his or her turn. Any balls that are pocketed by a foul shot must be re-spotted before the opposing shooter can take a legal shot.

A shot is considered foul if the break shot is unsuccessful, and if succeeding shots don't result in pocketing a ball or contacting the lowest numbered ball first. If a player fouls, he or she has three opportunities to correct the mistake. The player is notified after the second foul and if the third shot also results in a foul, the game is called and the fouling player is declared the loser. If a player is not eliminated as a result of a foul, the Nine Ball billiards game continues until the nine ball is legally pocketed.

Billiards is a fun game that can easily be enjoyed by players of all ages and skill levels. Many people make billiards a part of their regular nights out, and variations on the game, like Nine Ball, ensure that no two nights will be the same.