

# 2023 - 2024 Rules

## B.L.I.P. OPEN POOL LEAGUE

(Originally adopted from the 2002-2003 VNEA Rules Booklet<sup>®</sup>)

**Rule changes since last year's rules are displayed as bold red text on the [www.blip-pool.com](http://www.blip-pool.com) website.**

ERO (Eight-ball Run Out) has been added for league members who are interested in this statistic. It has no effect on any league trophy or cash awards. **Please be careful that you do not enter the number of ERO's in the regular match scoring columns!! The spreadsheet cannot calc correctly!!!**

### A. TEAM MATCHES:

1. Entry fee of \$40.00 per team **paid to the Secretary/Treasurer and due BEFORE** the first week of play. **A fee of \$6.00 per player per night or \$24.00 per team per night including the post-regular season tournament matches.** Money to operate the tables shall be taken from the fees. **Total annual fees less Secretary's and table fees to be divided equally among ALL players. \$375 from the additional \$1/player per night will be added to the awards night 16-man tournament which will pay 4 places - \$150-1<sup>st</sup>, \$100-2<sup>nd</sup>, \$75-3<sup>rd</sup> and \$50-4<sup>th</sup>.** The remainder of the additional \$1/player per evening including the post-regular season tournament will be added to the general payback fund for distribution to ALL teams on awards night.
2. **The location of the League Meeting in the Fall will be determined by a drawing from all Team's with a representative attending the Spring Award Night ceremonies. Only one consecutive Fall Meeting will be held at the same location.**
3. **Matches are on Thursday nights. The home bar is responsible for having a bridge (Granny Stick), supply of chalk and powder, and their table(s) ready for League play at 7:00 PM. All tables must have a clearly marked kitchen line and spot. Current League rules must be posted with immediate availability to the players. Home team is responsible for keeping a copy of the correct score sheet and emailing their results via the Online Score Sheet contained on the [www.blip-pool.com](http://www.blip-pool.com) website, or forwarding either the visiting team's or another matching copy to Scott Magaw via U.S. Postal service on Friday morning or hand-delivered to Kro Bar by midnight on the Friday immediately following the match. **We WILL NOT be calling in the scores the night of the match.****
4. **Each team will have a captain or acting captain present at each team match played. The captain or acting captain shall sign the score sheets. ALL home bars MUST keep a duplicate copy of the score sheet(s) after each night's games with the players' first and last names clearly specified.**
5. **The captains from each team will try to settle any disputes that may arise during the match. All disputes that cannot be resolved by the two captains at the match will be turned over to the League President.**
6. **The grace period to start the match is 15 minutes, which means you must have at least three roster players to start a match 15 minutes after the scheduled starting time, unless both team captains agree to start the match *under different mutually agreed upon circumstances*. Each player has five minutes to start an individual game from the time his game is called.**
7. **The team captains, within a match, may select a player to watch individual games and act as referee after the players call fouls, or to make the final decision on close hits. The player referees should rotate from each team watching the games.**
8. **If a game must be postponed for any reason, the League Secretary or a Board Member must be notified. A home team must give their opponent a 24-hour notice of postponement for any reason other than inclement weather. If due to inclement weather, a ½ hour notice is required. Each team must have at least three players. All postponed or missed games must be made up before the Play-offs begin. If not, the responsible team may be fined \$20.00 to be subtracted from the prize money at the season's end.**
9. **A player must shoot 75% of the total games to qualify for the individual standings. Handicaps are NOT calculated into the individual standings – handicaps are for team standings & tournament.**
10. **A player must shoot greater than .500 average to qualify for the individual standings.**

### B. THE TEAM:

1. **Each team is comprised of four players.** All players must be at least 21 years old. 18+ year old male players may participate if a **parent** is also participating in the match. A team must have at least three players to make a match, unless approved by the team captains before the match starts.

2. If substitutes are used - each team may use up to two substitutes to be entered into the team's match line-up prior to start of play. In the event that a roster member of a team is not available for the match, a substitute may be used. Substitutes normally pay league fees when they play. Substitutes may play for any team during the year, but after they have played 3 nights or 12 games for the same team, they are bonded to that team.  
**During the regular season matches only, if a team absolutely cannot find a 4<sup>th</sup> player, then that team is allowed to play a dummy round. The 3 players will rotate to play the 4<sup>th</sup> player's round. The player with the lowest handicap will play twice. Handicap is 7.5 for ALL dummy rounds. Teams will only be allowed to execute this rule a maximum of 2 times in a season. All games will still be played in order. 3-player teams are NOT allowed during the season-end play-offs. Must take a "0" score for the 4<sup>th</sup> player.**
3. A team with two or less roster players forfeits the match.
5. When a team does not show for a match, a \$20.00 fine may be assessed. The match must be made up within two weeks before the Play-offs at the bar of the team who originally showed up for the scheduled match. The team who originally showed up will be the home team.
6. When a team withdraws from the league, all wins/losses during the year will be erased from each affected team's record. The league will absorb all monies from the expelled team.

### C. LINE-UPS:

Line-ups will be placed on the score sheet by the home team captain first.

The captain of a team with less than four players available for the match must notify the opposing team captain before play begins and also state which position(s) in the line-up will be vacant.

### D. HANDICAPPING (New beginning with the 2008 – 2009 season.)

1. Players with an established handicap from the previous season will continue to use last year's handicap. New players must use the New Player Handicap (7.5) for three nights. After three nights or 12 games with the same team, a current handicap will be posted in the weekly stats.
2. The team captain may substitute one player for another during any or all rounds so long as the opposing team captain is notified before the start of the round in which the substitution will occur. Players may be switched in and out of any or all positions so long as they do not play the same opponent twice. Player substitutions may affect the Handicap; therefore, recalculate the Round Handicaps and the Total Handicap.
3. On the score sheet, write each player's FIRST & LAST NAMES, and their handicap. Add up the four players' handicaps to get the Team Handicap. The team with the lower Team Handicap is awarded a Round Handicap equal to the difference of the Team Handicaps, up to a maximum of 12.0 points. The team with the lower sum of the four Round Handicaps is awarded the difference as a Total Handicap, up to a maximum of 48.0 points.
4. The winner of each game receives 10 points and the loser receives one point for each of their group balls pocketed, no matter how they were pocketed. Each team captain should keep score on their own score sheet. It is each captain's responsibility to keep accurate scores. If a scoring dispute cannot be settled, the home team's score sheet is considered correct. **Each round, the team with the highest score (including Round Handicap) wins that round point. In the event of a tie at the end of a round each team receives ½ Win Point.**  
**At the end of the match, the team with the highest score (including Total Handicap) wins the fifth round point. In the event of a tie for total points, the team that won more games during the match shall win the fifth round point. (Still tied? Give each team a ½ Match point.)**
5. If a team does not have four players, they must still play their match. If the team cannot field a full team, they must still base their handicap on four players' averages. For whichever player(s) did not show up, the team must use 7.5 for missing player average to calculate their Team Handicap.
6. Occasionally, the wrong players start and/or play a full game out of turn. If the error is noticed before the game is complete, the game is canceled — no matter how well one player made be doing in that game. If the game is completed and the two opponents were supposed to play against each other later in the match, the score is recorded in the future round when the two opponents were supposed to play — no matter if the wrong player broke.
7. Each player's handicap is based on the number of balls they pocket, the number of balls their opponents pocket, the number of games they win, and the number of games their opponents win. For those of you interested in the formula, here it is:

$$H = [ Ps \div (Ps + Pa) ] \times 10 + [ Gw \div Gp ] \times 4$$

H = Handicap; Ps = points scored; Pa = points allowed; Gw = games won; Gp = games played.

Handicap rules borrowed from the Duluth BCA Pool League handicapped league with their permission. Modified by BLIP.

## 8-Ball Official Rules of Play

From VNEA Headquarters - Bay City, Michigan (2013-2014 Season)

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### A. BALLS AND RACKING

1. The game is played with one cue ball and fifteen numbered object balls.
2. The balls are racked by the breaking player, **unless he requests that his opponent racks the balls** in a triangle at the foot of the table with the 8-ball in the center of the triangle, the first ball of the rack on the footspot, a stripe ball in one corner of the rack and a solid ball in the other corner.
3. The object of the game is to make one group of numbered object balls, either stripes or solids, and then **LEGALLY POCKET THE 8-BALL** which then wins the game.

### B. BREAK SHOT

1. The home team breaks the first four games – visiting team breaks the next four games. Home team breaks the next four games then visiting team breaks the last four games.
2. If the breaker hits the racked balls with the cue ball driving four or more numbered balls to a cushion or pocketing one or more object balls, the game is considered started. If the player fails to make a legal break, it is not a foul; however, the opponent has the options of (1) accepting the table in position and shooting, or, (2) **the opponent re-racking the balls himself and shooting the break himself or have the original breaker re-rack and re-break.**
3. Stopping or deflecting the cue ball prior to hitting the racked balls are considered fouls and result in loss of turn. The opponent will receive cue ball in hand behind the headstring.
4. When positioning the cue ball for the break shot, the base of the ball must be behind the headstring (in the kitchen).
5. If a player scratches on a legal break shot, (1) all pocketed balls remain pocketed (except the 8-ball), (2) it is a foul, (3) the table is open. **PLEASE NOTE:** Incoming player has cue ball in hand behind the headstring and may not shoot an object ball whose base is not outside the headstring, unless he first shoots the cue ball past the headstring and causes the cue ball to come back behind the headstring and hit the object ball. If the player positions the cue ball completely and obviously outside the kitchen and shoots the cue ball, it is a foul, if called by the opponent.
6. The opposing player must inform the breaking player of improper positioning of the cue ball before the shot is made. If the opposing player does not so inform the breaking player before the shot is made, the break is considered legal. If the shooting player is informed of improper positioning, he must then reposition the cue ball.
7. Making the eight ball on the break. **(Leagues may adopt Option #1 or Option #2.)**  
~~Option #1. An automatic win for the player breaking, however, if the cue ball is scratched when making the 8-ball on the break, the opponent wins the game.~~  
Option #2. The breaker may ask for a re-rack or have the 8-ball spotted and continue shooting. Should the breaker pocket the 8-ball and scratch, the incoming player has the option of spotting the 8-ball and shooting from behind the headstring or re-racking and assuming the break. Using option #2, a game cannot be won or lost with an 8-ball on the break, regardless of what is pocketed on the same shot. **NOTE: (Rule #7 as stated here was officially adopted by the VNEA with the 2002-2003 Season. The BLIP and VNEA uses Option #2 above.)**
8. If the player legally breaks the racked balls and does not make any balls, his opponent then shoots, having an open table.
9. If a player jumps an object ball off the table on a break shot, it is a foul and the incoming player has the option of (1) accepting the table position and shooting, or (2) taking cue ball in hand behind the headstring and shooting. Any jumped balls are spotted in numerical order.

### C. OPEN TABLE

The table is "open" when the choice of groups (stripes or solids) has not been determined. When the table is open, it is legal to hit a solid first to make a stripe or vice versa. Note: The table is ALWAYS open immediately after the break shot. When the table is open it is legal to hit any solid or stripe or the 8-ball first in the process of pocketing the called stripe or solid. On an open table, all pocketed balls remain pocketed. The choice of stripes or solids is not determined on the break even if balls are made from only one or both groups. **THE TABLE IS ALWAYS OPEN IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE BREAK SHOT.** The choice of group is determined only when a player legally pockets a called object ball after the break shot.

### D. GAME

In Call Pocket, obvious balls and pockets do not have to be indicated. It is the opponent's right to ask which ball and pocket if he is unsure of the shot. Banks and combinations are not considered obvious and both the object ball and pocket must be called, or it is loss of turn. When calling the shot, it is NEVER necessary to indicate details such as the number of cushions, banks, kisses, caroms, etc. Any balls pocketed on a foul remain pocketed, regardless of whether they belong to the shooter or the opponent.

The opening break is not a "called pocket." Any player performing a break shot in 8-Ball may continue to shoot his next shot so long as he has legally pocketed any object ball on the break.

When a player has pocketed all of the balls in his group, he then shoots at the 8-ball, after clearly calling the pocket that he intends to pocket the 8-ball in. (BLIP only requires verbal call pocket.)

**NOTE:** The following "pocket marker" or "patch" rule for designating the intended pocket for the 8-ball is the Official VNEA 8-Ball League Rule. However, our BLIP League has not voted on or adopted this procedure for calling the 8-ball. *When a player has pocketed all of the balls in his group, he then shoots at the 8-ball, physically designating his pocket with a pocket marker. The marker is to be placed on the table COMPLETELY WITHIN THE FIRST TWO DIAMONDS on either side of the pocket. The entire area between the diamonds included. You do not have to touch or move the marker if it is already at your intended pocket.* (THIS RULE DOES NOT APPLY TO OUR LEAGUE AS YET. HOWEVER, IF YOU PLAN ON SHOOTING IN ANY SANCTIONED VNEA TOURNAMENTS THIS YEAR, YOU WILL BE EXPECTED TO ABIDE BY THIS RULE.)

### E. PLAY

1. If a shooter inadvertently pockets his opponent's ball, it remains down, however, if the shooter does not legally pocket one of his own group, he loses his turn.
2. Each player continues to shoot so long as he legally pockets any of his object balls (Exception: calling a safety). Should a player fail to pocket his designated group ball, he shall lose his turn.
3. If a player fails to hit the 8-ball while shooting at it, it is a foul and the game continues. If a player scratches the cue ball while shooting at and not pocketing the 8-ball, it is a foul and the game continues. However, if a player scratches the cue ball while shooting at and pocketing the 8-ball, he loses the game.
4. In the event the cue ball or an object ball stops on the edge of a pocket, then falls into the pocket because of vibrations, fan or stamping of feet, it shall be replaced on the edge of the pocket as near as possible to its position before the interference.
5. If any object ball is jumped off the table, it is a foul and loss of turn, unless it is the 8-ball, which is a loss of game. Any jumped object balls are spotted in numerical order.
6. **SLOW PLAY RULE:** Exaggerated slow play will be penalized. After a warning, any longer than ONE MINUTE between shots will be a foul. The third infraction will result in loss of game. During VNEA National competition, referees judgement will prevail and both players will be timed.
7. **STALEMATED GAME:** If, in three consecutive turns at the table by each player (six turns total), they purposely foul or scratch and both players agree that attempting to pocket or move an object ball will result in immediate loss of game, then the game will be considered a stalemate. The balls will then be re-racked and the breaker of the stalemated game will break again. **PLEASE NOTE:** Three consecutive fouls by one player is not a loss of game.

## F. LOSS OF GAME

1. Pocketing the 8-ball when it is not the legal object ball except on an opening break.
2. Pocketing the 8-ball on the same stroke as the last of his group of balls.
3. Jumping or knocking the 8-ball off the table at any time.
4. Pocketing the 8-ball in a pocket other than the one designated.
5. Fouling while pocketing the 8-ball in the designated pocket.
6. Third infraction of the slow play rule.
7. Pocketing the 8-ball and the cue ball on the break stroke. (This varies if your league considers an 8-ball break a win.)
8. Not verbally calling the pocket while pocketing the 8-ball. A player must verbally call the pocket before shooting at the eight ball. He does not have to register a hit; but to prove good sportsmanship he should make an honest effort to hit the eight ball.

Note: All infractions above must be called before the next shot is taken.

**ONLY THE PLAYERS INVOLVED MAY CALL AN INFRACTION!!!**

## G. LEGAL SHOTS

On all shots (except on the break and when the table is open), the shooter must hit one of his group of balls first and (1) pocket any group ball, or (2) cause the cue ball or any other ball to contact a rail. (There are two groups of balls: stripes and solids.)

PLEASE NOTE: It is permissible for the shooter to bank the cue ball off a rail before contacting his object ball; however, after contact with his object ball, any group ball must be pocketed, OR the cue ball or any other ball must contact a rail.

"SAFETY" SHOT: For tactical reasons a player may choose to pocket an obvious object ball and also discontinue his turn at the table by declaring "safety" or "safe" in advance. A safety shot is defined as a legal shot. If the shooting player intends to play safe by pocketing an obvious object ball, then prior to the shot, he must declare a safety to his opponent. If this is NOT done, and one of the shooter's object balls is pocketed, the shooter will be required to shoot again. Any ball pocketed on a safety shot remains pocketed.

## H. FOULING

All fouls must be called and acknowledged before the next shot is taken. (Exception: scratching)

The following results in fouls:

1. Failure to make a legal shot as noted above.
2. Shooting the cue ball into a pocket or off the table.
3. It is a foul when a player scratches on the break, or deflects the cue ball prior to hitting the racked balls. The incoming player receives cue ball in hand behind the headstring.
4. When placing the cue ball in position, ANY forward stroke motion contacting the cue ball will be a foul, if not a legal shot.  
*(To be safe, just do not use the cue to re-position the cue ball prior to the shot!)*
5. Shooting without at least one foot touching the floor.
6. Coaching is a foul. Any member of a team called for coaching will result in a foul on the team member shooting.
7. Object Ball Frozen To Cushion Or Cue Ball.  
This applies to any shot where the cue ball's first contact with a ball is with one that is frozen to a cushion or to the cue ball itself. After the cue ball makes contact with the frozen ball, the shot must result in either:
  - a.) A ball being pocketed, or;
  - b.) The cue ball contacting a cushion, or;
  - c.) The frozen ball being caused to contact a cushion attached to a separate rail, or;
  - d.) Another object ball being caused to contact a cushion with which it was not already in contact.Failure to satisfy one of those four requirements is a foul.

8. **ACCIDENTALLY** moving or touching any ball is not a foul unless:
  - a.) the moved ball is the cue ball or
  - b.) a moved ball makes contact with the cue ball or
  - c.) a moved ball that is jumped off the table or pocketed or causes any ball to be jumped off the table or pocketed. (Exception to rule #8c: If the 8-ball is jumped off the table or pocketed it is loss of game if called by the opponent before the next shot is taken). Only opponent may replace the ball moved as closely as possible to its original position or leave it where it rests. If the shooter replaces the moved ball, it will be considered a foul.
9. Picking up or shooting the cue ball while any balls are still in motion is a foul.
10. **Push shots and/or double hits will NO LONGER be considered fouls.**
11. With cue ball in hand, touching any object ball with the cue ball is a foul or touching any object ball with your hand while touching the cue ball is a foul.
12. When the slow play rule is enforced, taking longer than **ONE MINUTE** between shots is a foul.  
*Note: Certain moments during a game or type of game may require extra thought or concentration. However, continuously taking 1 to 3 minutes between shots is NOT acceptable. When your opponent abuses this rule, stop play. The team captains will assign a player to time your opponent for the rest of the match. After a warning, any longer than ONE MINUTE between shots will be a foul. The third infraction will result in loss of game.*
13. Jumping object balls off the table.
14. After a scratch on a legal break, if a player positions the cue ball completely and obviously outside the kitchen and shoots it is a foul.
15. If your opponent commits a foul and you do not receive his acknowledgement of such foul prior to touching the cue ball, you have committed a foul. (Exception: scratching)
16. **Illegal jumping of ball.** *It is a foul if a player strikes the cue ball below center ("digs under" it) and intentionally causes it to rise off the bed of the table in an effort to clear an obstructing ball. Such jumping action may occasionally occur accidentally, and such "jumps" are not to be considered fouls on their face; they may still be ruled foul strokes, if for example the ferrule or cue shaft makes contact with the cue ball in the course of the shot.*

#### **I. PENALTY FOR FOULING**

1. Only the players involved may call a foul. In the event of a foul call, the opposing player receives cue ball in hand anywhere on the table. This means that the player can place the cue ball anywhere on the table (the cue ball does not have to be behind the headstring except on the opening break or immediately after a foul on the break).
2. A player must stop shooting when a foul is called. If a player refuses to yield to a foul call, the opposing captain may protest.

#### **J. PROTEST PROCEDURE**

1. Only the team captain has the authority to protest.
2. The League officers and Board will review the protest and make a decision by majority vote.
3. A protest must be given to the League President in writing within 48 hours after the match. The League may ask for a deposit of \$5 and \$10 with the written protest.
4. The League President has the right to disregard any protest not properly presented, such as phone calls or personal contact, before the protest is presented in writing.
5. A game may be played and finished under protest, which may alleviate the original protest.

#### **K. FORFEITS**

1. Winners will receive one round point per round forfeited. If all rounds are forfeited, the winning team will receive 5 points and the forfeiting team will receive 0 points.
2. Both teams pay monies owed to the League to receive further points.

## L. UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT

1. Unsportsmanlike conduct is automatic disqualification. You know it when you see or hear it. If you are playing, stop play, call the foul, describe the unsportsmanlike conduct to the two team captains. They can issue the warning. If the captains cannot agree on the un-sportsmanlike conduct call, the offended player may still have his captain lodge a formal League protest.
2. Two basic types:
  - a. One warning before disqualification. (BLIP has adopted this type.)
  - b. ~~Immediate disqualification.~~

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## BLIP SEASON-END PLAY-OFFS:

### (DO NOT CONFUSE THIS TOURNAMENT WITH THE AWARDS NIGHT TOURNAMENT!!)

- A player must have shot at least **16 games** and generated an established handicap in the League prior to the Play-offs to be eligible for all Play-off play.
- **Illegal players (Under-age, not enough games to qualify, etc.) will generate a 0-10 score for EACH game played by the illegal player during the play-offs. (Note: Same as listing no player. Therefore, this "non-penalty" does NOT discourage attempts to sneak illegal players into the match.)**
- If there are logically two matches to be scheduled at an establishment with one table, the lower ranked team and their opponent must determine where and when to play their match. It must be played by the following Monday with results forwarded to the league secretary.
- **Individual handicaps without the Team handicap win point will be used throughout the Season-end Play-offs Tournament.**
- **The Season-end Play-offs Tournament matches will be a race to the first team to win 3 round points with handicap until only 2 teams remain for the final 2-week play-offs rounds.**
- **The finals will be held over a two week period with a race to 7 Round wins. One night at each of the final contestant's location.**
- **The top ranking team will choose home or away for the first Final Play-off night.**
- **In the event of an exact tie, including the handicap win points, the team that won more games during the match shall win the round point. (Still tied? Captains flip a coin, or designate a player to shoot the opposing team's designated player, or both teams play an entire 5<sup>th</sup> round to decide the final outcome, or ??????. The final resolution decision rests with the Team Captains.)**
- If at the end of regulation play-off play the match is tied (2.5-2.5 Round Wins in Regular play-off match), the visiting Captain shall flip a coin and the home team Captain shall make the call. The winner of the coin toss will then have the option of breaking or racking. The break will alternate for the remainder of the first four-game round. The coin toss will be repeated at the beginning of each four-game round with the breaks alternating each game. The winner of the match will be determined based on the round Wins at the end of a four-game round. Players match up as they were in the 1<sup>st</sup> round.
- **Top 16 players are eligible to play in Year-end Awards Night Tournament at the Awards Night ceremonies held at League tournament winner's establishment. The additional \$1 per player/night (\$8) to be split as \$375 (\$150 for 1<sup>st</sup>, \$100 to 2<sup>nd</sup>, \$75 to 3<sup>rd</sup> and \$50 for the 4<sup>th</sup> place finishers in the 16-man Tournament prize money) and the balance to the general payback monies to ALL players. Please note that a 16-man Year-end Awards Night Tournament on awards night probably cannot be held at a 1-table establishment.**

## CUE SPECIFICATIONS

- WIDTH OF TIP: Not to exceed 15mm.
- LENGTH OF CUE: 40 inches minimum.

Note: These rules are the result of VALLEY NATIONAL 8-BALL LEAGUE ASSOCIATION®  
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## LEAGUE OFFICERS AND BOARD

President:	Chris Zoltak	715-374-3514
Secretary/Treasurer:	Scott Magaw	715-372-5887
Board:	Dean Baillie	715-372-4876
	Troy Paquette	1-414-690-1495