
Note: Supporting narrated video (NV) demonstrations, high-speed video (HSV) clips, and technical proofs (TP), and all of my past articles, can be accessed and viewed online at billiards.colostate.edu. The reference numbers used in the article help you locate the resources on the website. If you have a slow or inconvenient Internet connection, you might want to view the resources from a CD-ROM or DVD. Details can be found online at: dr-dave-billiards.com.

This is the fifth and final article in this series on pool rules, which features shots from a pool rules quiz I recently created with fellow BD columnist Bob Jewett. The quiz can be viewed online in **NV B.61**. In addition, **NV B.62** provides answers and brief explanations for each shot, while **NV B.63** provides a more thorough instruction in each foul category. All calls in the quiz and this series of articles are based on the internationally-recognized **World Standardized Rules** published by the World Pool-Billiards Association (WPA). The complete set of rules can be viewed online at www.wpa-pool.com. In the first four articles, we've looked at fouls involving not contacting a rail after the cue ball (CB) hits the object ball (OB), hitting the wrong ball first, and double-hitting and/or pushing the CB. This month, we look at a few miscellaneous fouls not covered in previous articles.



[NV B.61](#) – Pool rules quiz for referees and players, with Bob Jewett

[NV B.62](#) – Answers to pool rules quiz for referees and players

[NV B.63](#) – Instruction for pool rules quiz

Here are excerpts from the pertinent WPA rules concerning the shots in this article:

6.2 Wrong Ball First

In those games which require the first object ball struck to be a particular ball or one of a group of balls, it is a foul for the cue ball to first contact any other ball.

6.6 Touched Ball

It is a foul to touch, move or change the path of any object ball except by the normal ball-to-ball contacts during shots.

6.7 Double Hit / Frozen Balls

If the cue stick contacts the cue ball more than once on a shot, the shot is a foul.

6.16 Unsportsmanlike Conduct

... the referee may impose a penalty depending on his judgment of the conduct. ...

Unsportsmanlike conduct ... includes:

(c) playing a shot by intentionally miscuing;

8.16 Jump Shot

A jump shot is one in which the cue ball is made to go over an intervening obstacle such as an object ball or part of the cushion. Whether such a shot is legal depends on how it is accomplished and the intention of the shooter. Usually a legal jump shot is played by elevating the cue stick and driving the cue ball down into the playing surface from which it rebounds.

8.18 Miscue

A miscue occurs when the cue tip slides off the cue ball possibly due to a contact that is too eccentric or to insufficient chalk on the tip. Although some miscues involve contact of the side of the cue stick with the cue ball, unless such contact is clearly visible, it is assumed not to have occurred. A scoop shot, in which the cue tip contacts the playing surface and the cue ball at the same time and this causes the cue ball to rise off the cloth, is treated like a miscue.

Diagram 1 shows example where an obstacle ball is bumped accidentally with the cue or bridge hand during a shot. The standard rule in this situation is “all-ball fouls” (see WPA Rule 6.6). In this case, you are not allowed to come in contact with any ball before, during, or after a shot. The only exception is the cue tip hitting the CB during a single-hit, legal stroke. A common variation on this rule in many tournaments and leagues is called “CB fouls only.” In this case, the illegal contact applies only to the CB. An exception is when any touched or moved ball affects the shot by directly or indirectly changing the path of any ball in motion, in which case the unintentional contact is a foul. In shot 10 (the 1-ball shot in Diagram 1), the bridge hand unintentionally touches and moves the 4-ball during the shot. If playing under “all-ball fouls,” this would, by definition, be a foul. But if playing under “CB fouls only,” this shot would be fair, because the 4-ball never comes into play (i.e., it doesn’t any moving ball). Your opponent has the option to reposition any unintentionally moved balls to their original locations, but there is no foul. In shot 65, however, the CB hits the 5-ball after the 5-ball is unintentionally moved during the shot. So even if you are playing under “CB fouls only,” this shot would be a foul, because the 5-ball affects the CB’s motion.

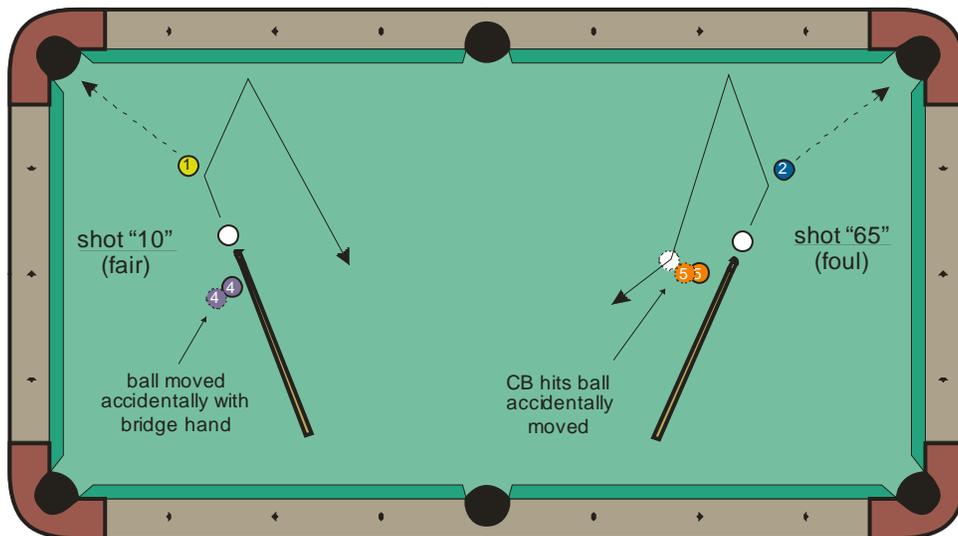


Diagram 1 Accidentally touched ball

Diagram 2 shows two “scoop” shots, where the CB is jumped over a ball by either hitting very low on the ball, or as the result of a miscue. In shot 12 (the 2-ball shot), the game is 9-ball, so we must contact the 2-ball first (per WPA Rule 6.2). Here, a “scoop” shot is being employed to jump over the 3-ball. Per WPA rules 8.16 and 8.18, this is a foul. In fact, because of the obvious intent is to scoop the CB, the foul could be ruled as unsportsmanlike conduct as well (per WPA Rules 6.16 and 8.18). This can result in a stiffer penalty than an ordinary foul, per the discretion of the referee. As shown in the super-slow-motion clips in NV B.63-part 6 (see also: **HSV B.2**), a scoop shot doesn’t always involve a miscue or double hit. If the cue tip slides along the cloth and/or hits

the CB and table at the same time, the CB is launched into the air with a single non-miscue hit from the tip. Nevertheless, an intentional scoop is still a foul.

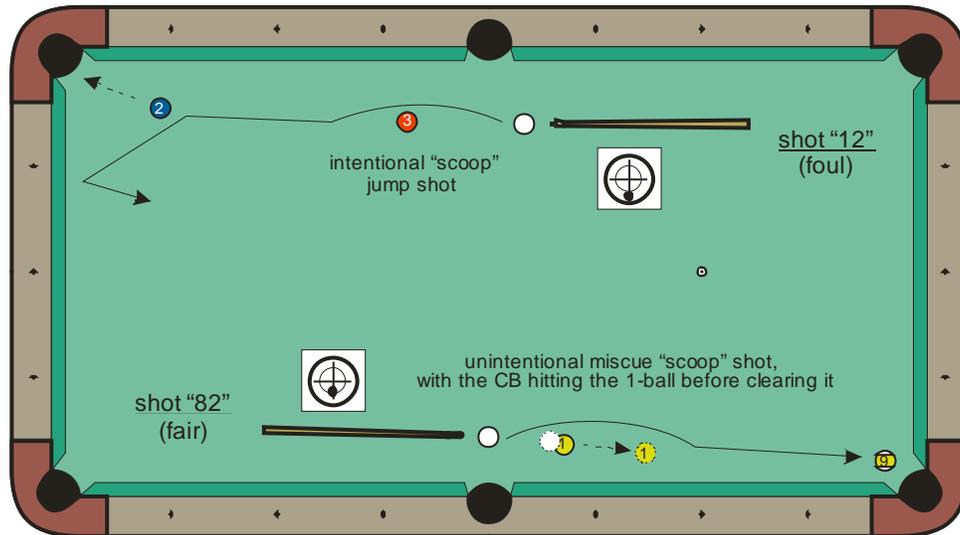


Diagram 2 "Scoop" shots



HSV B.2 – Illegal "scoop" jump shots

Shot 82 (the 1-ball shot) in Diagram 2 shows an unintentional scoop. In this example, there is no reason to believe a player intended to jump over the 1-ball, because the 1-ball-9-ball combination is the obvious (and easiest) option, resulting in a win. Also, if you entirely clear the 1-ball, the shot is a foul because the 9-ball would then be contacted first (per WPA Rule 6.2). Therefore, any scoop here is probably unintentional and would not be ruled as a foul ... provided the CB touches the 1-ball while airborne.

Diagram 3 shows a shot where a miscue results in a foul whether or not the miscue was intentional or not. The 1-ball is frozen to the rail and the CB is frozen to the 1-ball. There is no reasonable legal shot on the 1-ball, but the CB can be kissed off the 1-ball with right English for the billiard shot on the 9-ball for the win, as per the blue path in the diagram (see **HSV B.28**). However, the billiard shot isn't easy; and if you miss, you will likely lose the game. Here, a knowledgeable and devious player might decide to intentionally miscue, hoping the opponent or referee might judge the miscue as unintentional, and therefore not a foul. Most miscues do involve double hits (see **HSV B.36**), but an unintentional miscue is not a foul unless a double hit is "clearly visible" (per WPA Rules 6.7 and 8.18).

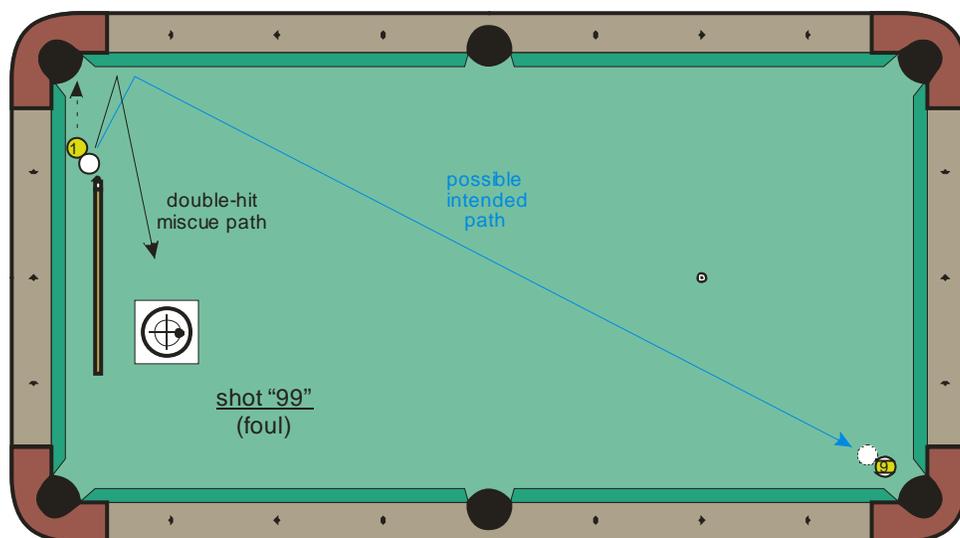
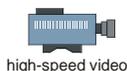


Diagram 3 Double-hit and/or intentional miscue



high-speed video

HSV B.28 – Frozen-ball kiss, miscue, and push shots and fouls
HSV B.36 – Various miscues with double-hit rule interpretation

NV B.63 – part 4 shows various versions of the shot in Diagram 3, with different outcomes. The shots are also shown in super-slow-motion so you can see what is happening more clearly. In shot 99, the 1-ball, is “herded” into the pocket. This can occur only with multiple hits on the CB, as shown in the super-slow-motion clip. Here, based on the motion of the balls, an experienced referee can confidently judge that the miscue resulted in a double hit. In fact, if the referee thinks the shooter is intentionally miscuing, hoping the foul wouldn’t be called, he or she could rule the shot as unsportsmanlike conduct, which can come with a stiffer penalty than ball-in-hand (e.g., loss of game or the match, per WPA Rules 6.16 and 8.18). In this example, it doesn’t really matter for the game, because the double-hit foul will result in ball-in-hand with the 9-ball hanger. However, the referee would also have the right to issue an even stronger penalty (e.g., loss of match) if it is obvious that the miscue was intentional. It might seem odd that a referee could be asked to judge the intent of a player, but these “gray areas” exist in every sport, and pool is no exception. A good analogy is a personal foul in football, where the referee must judge whether or not there is malicious intent to know what penalty is appropriate.

You can view demonstrations and explanations of all of the shots in this article (and many other related shots) in parts 4 and 6 of **NV B.63**. The videos include the appropriate ruling (fair or foul) and the reason behind each ruling. Be sure to watch the videos online. The super-slow-motion clips included really help visually reinforce the topics and examples covered.

Well, I hope you have enjoyed and benefitted from my series of articles dealing with pool rules. Please encourage all of your pool-playing friends, teammates, league members, and referees to take the quiz and view the instructional videos online. If people had a better understanding of all of the rules and how they are applied, there might be fewer “differences of opinion” during league night.

Good luck with your game,
 Dr. Dave

PS:

- If you want to refer to any of my previous articles and resources, you can access them online at billiards.colostate.edu.
- I know other authors and I tend to use lots of terminology (e.g., squirt, throw, stun, impact line, etc.), and I know not all readers are totally familiar with these terms. If you ever come across a word or phrase you don't fully understand, please refer to the [online glossary](#) on my website.
- I want to thank Jim Valasina. He graciously proof-reads my articles every month to help find errors and make suggestions. My article quality is better as a result of his efforts. Thanks again Jim!

Dr. Dave is author of the book, DVD, and CD-ROM: "[The Illustrated Principles of Pool and Billiards](#)," and the DVD: "[High-speed Video Magic](#)."