Concise WPA-Style Rules of One Pocket

by Bob Jewett

The following set of rules for One Pocket are intended to be compatible with the World Standardized Rules (WSR), available at: https://wpapool.com/rules-of-play

Note that the WSR and the accompanying Rules Regulations (also on the WPA website) cover play in general and must be known and understood in order to understand the rules below.

10. One Pocket

One pocket is played with 15 object balls and the cue ball. Each player is assigned a foot pocket and the winner of the rack is the first to score eight object balls in his pocket. Matches are to a given number of racks.

10.1 Determining the Break

The player who wins the lag chooses who will break the first rack. (See 1.2 Lagging to Determine Order of Play.) The standard format is to alternate the break, but see Regulation 15, Subsequent Break Shots.

10.2 Rack at One Pocket

The fifteen object balls are racked as tightly as possible in a triangle, with the apex ball on the foot spot. The balls are placed in the triangle without purposeful or intentional pattern. A ball rack template will not be used for one pocket.

10.3 Selecting Pockets and the Break Shot

The breaker of each rack will choose his pocket and the opponent gets the other foot pocket. If the breaker does not explicitly indicate a pocket, he is assigned the foot pocket opposite to the side of the cue ball placement for the break.

The cue ball begins in hand behind the head string. There are no special requirements for the break shot.

10.4 Continuing Play

The shooter's turn continues until he fails to pocket a ball in his pocket, fouls, or the rack is won by a player reaching eight points. The incoming player shoots from the position left by the previous player except when he has ball in hand behind the head string.

10.5 Scoring

Each ball legally pocketed in one of the foot pockets counts one point for the corresponding player. In addition, balls pocketed in the opponent's pocket on a foul shot count for him and are not spotted under 10.6 below unless the only foul committed was 6.1 Cue Ball Scratch or off the Table.

The balls scored by each player are used as physical markers for the score in two corresponding storage locations. When a foul occurs, one of the fouler's scored balls is spotted as the one-point penalty in addition to any other balls that need to be spotted at that time. If a player has no ball to spot for a foul, a marker is placed to indicate a ball is owed by him. If the player later scores balls, they are spotted to cancel any owed balls up to the number of owed balls.

(While other scoring systems are possible, such as electronic scoring, using the physical balls as markers helps prevent scoring errors.)

10.6 Spotting Balls

Balls are spotted if they have been pocketed on a foul shot, pocketed in a side or head pocket, or driven off the table. Balls are also spotted as a penalty for a foul or to pay for previous fouls (owed balls) as described above. (See 1.4 Spotting Balls.) Spotting is usually done at the end of the shooter's turn, but if the shooter clears the table and has not reached eight points, perhaps due to balls having been pocketed in extraneous pockets, all balls to be spotted are spotted at that time and the shooter continues his turn.

10.7 Forgetting to Spot Balls

If a ball is not spotted when it should be and is later noticed, it will normally be spotted when each player has had one full turn after the discovery. If both players agree, the ball will be spotted immediately.

10.8 Standard Fouls

If the shooter commits a standard foul he loses one point, balls are spotted as necessary, and play passes to his opponent. The cue ball remains in position except as noted below.

The following are standard fouls at one pocket:

6.1 Cue Ball Scratch or off the Table -- The cue ball is in hand above the head string.

6.3 No Rail after Contact

6.4 No Foot on Floor

6.5 Ball Driven off the Table

6.6 Touched Ball

6.7 Double Hit / Frozen Balls

6.8 Push Shot

6.9 Balls Still Moving

6.10 Bad Cue Ball Placement

6.11 Bad Play from Behind the Head String -- For a foul under the second paragraph of 6.11, the cue ball is in hand above the head string for the incoming player.

6.12 Cue Stick on the Table

6.13 Playing out of Turn

6.15 Slow Play

10.9 Serious Fouls

For 6.14 Three Consecutive Fouls, the penalty is loss of the current rack. For 6.17 Unsportsmanlike Conduct, the referee will choose an appropriate penalty given the nature of the offense.

10.10 Stalemate

If a stalemate occurs (see 1.12 Stalemate), all 15 balls will be re-racked, and the players will lag to see who has the next shot. Any markers for owed balls will be preserved and positive partial scores from the abandoned rack will be carried over to the rerack. (Those partial scores should be written down as there will not be object balls to use as physical markers for them.)

10.11 Simultaneous Win

If a player scores both his winning ball and his opponent's winning ball on the same shot the win is given to the shooter. (This can only happen with a score handicap or a stalemate rerack.)

Note:

There are some other gray areas and traditional rules that are better left to the tournament management or the players if it is a private match. Such things include banning jump cues, allowing touch fouls of one object ball to pass (commonly and incorrectly called "cue ball fouls only"), forbidding intentional manipulation of the balls by multiple hits on the cue ball, playing "you snooze, you lose" in which forgotten owed balls are cancelled, and scoring balls pocketed in a mistaken run into the opponent's pocket.