Tournament format & entry

Friday, October 30, 2026 | The Backbeat Music & Billiards, Berea, Kentucky

When and where

Play starts at 7 PM Eastern. Sign-ups close at 6 PM Eastern that Friday. Sign up and prepay in person at The Backbeat, 1762 Big Hill Rd, Berea, KY 40403. A minimum of 10 players is required; the field is limited to 20.

Entry fee: $35 total

$20 goes to the tournament prize pool, $5 is the green fee, and $10 covers admission to live entertainment. Only the $20 tournament portion funds payouts. The green fee and entertainment cover are excluded.

Race to 3, winner breaks

Each rack is one game. The first player to win three racks wins the match; for example, 3-0, 3-1, or 3-2. After a completed rack, its winner breaks the next rack. Check with staff about the first break of each match before play begins.

Double elimination and the final

A first match loss moves a player to the losers' bracket; a second match loss eliminates that player. A rack loss alone does not move a player between brackets. The winners' bracket finalist enters the final undefeated. If that player wins the first race to 3, the tournament ends. If the losers' bracket finalist wins it, both finalists then have one match loss, so they play a second race to 3 to decide the champion.

10-minute table-reporting rule

Once a match is called and a table is assigned, players have 10 minutes to report to that table. A player who does not report within the window forfeits the match. This is a match loss, not simply a lost rack.

House rules take priority

No jump shots and no masse shots. A jump shot intentionally sends the cue ball over another ball; a masse shot uses an elevated cue to make the cue ball curve. Do not attempt either shot. The Backbeat's format and house rules override the linked reference rules wherever they differ.

The rack, the break & winning

Use the lowest-numbered ball first; win the rack by legally pocketing the 9-ball.

How a normal rack is played

Use the cue ball and object balls 1 through 9. On each ordinary shot, the cue ball must contact the lowest-numbered ball still on the table first. A legally pocketed ball lets you continue, but it does not have to be the lowest-numbered ball. Pocketing the 9-ball legally wins the rack. You do not have to call its pocket.

Combination example

If the 2-ball is lowest, you may hit the 2 first and send it into the 9. If the 9 drops and you commit no foul, you win that rack. Hitting the 9 first while the 2 remains would be a wrong-ball foul.

Racking

Make a tight diamond rack. Put the 1-ball at the front on the foot spot, the 9-ball in the middle, and the other balls in any order. The foot spot is the table mark at the racking end.

Legal break

Break from behind the head string at the opposite end of the table. Aim to hit the 1-ball first. At least four object balls must reach a rail, or an object ball must be pocketed. The cue ball cannot go to a rail before hitting the rack. Use a firm, controlled break; the supplied rules do not permit deliberately soft or safe breaks.

Break outcomes

Legal break, no ball pocketed: the opponent shoots next. Legal break with a ball pocketed and no foul: the breaker continues. Legally pocketing the 9 on the break wins the rack. If the 9 falls with a foul or scratch, spot it and give the opponent ball-in-hand anywhere on the table.

Illegal break and the special first-contact exception

Under the supplied reference, if the rack is contacted but the break does not qualify as legal, re-rack and have the same player break again. If that illegal break also scratches, the opponent breaks the re-racked balls. The rack must be struck before a break foul can occur. The reference also says missing the 1-ball first on the break is not, by itself, a foul; this exception does not apply to ordinary shots.

Legal shots, fouls & ball-in-hand

The supplied 9-ball document incorporates general foul rules from its companion 8-ball document.

A legal ordinary shot

Hit the lowest-numbered ball first. After that contact, pocket a ball or send the cue ball or any object ball to a rail. Touching a rail before contacting the object ball does not satisfy the after-contact requirement. An announced push-out, explained on the next page, is a special exception.

Common ball-in-hand fouls

Examples include pocketing or knocking the cue ball off the table; hitting the wrong ball first; missing every object ball; and failing the after-contact rail requirement. Accidentally moving or redirecting the cue ball is also a foul, except for permitted placement when you already have ball-in-hand. In-turn shot-selection coaching is illegal aid under the reference rules; discussing a rule or pointing out a foul is not the same as coaching.

What ball-in-hand means

After an applicable foul, the opponent may place the cue ball anywhere on the playing surface and then shoot at the lowest-numbered ball. This applies after a foul on a legal 9-ball break as well; the 8-ball restriction to behind the head string does not apply. Confirm ball-in-hand with the opponent before picking up the cue ball. Take care not to touch another ball while placing it.

Frozen balls and close hits

If an object ball is touching a rail, have both players acknowledge that it is frozen before the shot. Merely nudging it against the same rail does not satisfy the rail rule: drive it to another rail, send another ball to a rail, or have the cue ball reach a rail after legal contact. For a doubtful first-contact shot, ask staff or an agreed observer to watch before shooting.

Accidentally moved object balls

The companion reference does not automatically treat an accidentally moved object ball as a foul. Stop and have the opponent restore it at the proper time, after motion has stopped. If that displaced ball contacts the cue ball, the reference treats it as a cue-ball foul and says not to restore object balls in that situation. Ask staff before moving anything when the positions are disputed.

Calling a foul and a fouled 9-ball

Call a foul promptly and resolve it before the next shot. The reference's wrong-ball provision requires a call before the shooter later makes first contact with the correct ball. If the 9 is pocketed on a fouled shot, it is spotted rather than awarded as a win. The opponent then plays with ball-in-hand at the lowest ball remaining.

Push-outs, spotting & examples

These situations are easy to confuse with other versions of 9-ball. Follow the supplied reference.

When a push-out is allowed

A push-out is available only on the first shot immediately after a legal break. If the breaker made a ball, the breaker may choose it; if the break was dry, the incoming player may choose it. Announce "push-out" before shooting. Without that announcement, it is judged as an ordinary shot.

What changes during a push-out

You may reposition the cue ball without satisfying the normal lowest-ball-first and after-contact rail requirements. Other applicable fouls, including scratching, still matter. After a legal push-out, the opponent chooses either to shoot from the new cue-ball position or to return the shot to the player who pushed out. Normal rules then resume. Under the supplied document, balls pocketed on a push-out are spotted, not counted.

Push-out example

You break legally, pocket the 4, and have no reasonable view of the 1. You announce a push-out and move the cue ball to a different position. Your opponent may take that position or ask you to shoot again. A push-out is not a second break, and it cannot be used later in the rack.

Balls driven off the table

The cue ball leaving the playing surface is a foul. In the supplied reference, an object ball leaving the table is not automatically a foul: spot it. If you otherwise legally pocketed a ball, you continue. When several object balls need spotting, arrange them in numerical order with the lowest closest to the foot spot; place them directly behind occupied spots as needed.

Pocketed balls and delayed drops

A ball must stay in the pocket to count. If it bounces back onto the table, it has not been pocketed. Balls jammed in a pocket beyond the playing surface are treated as pocketed. A ball that hangs for more than a few seconds and then falls is restored to its previous position under the reference rules.

A stalemate or a disagreement

The supplied rules call for a re-rack when neither player can or will make use of ball-in-hand; the player who broke that rack breaks the replacement rack. For an unresolved rule question, pause and ask staff before the next shot. Do not move balls while their positions or the result are in dispute.

Payouts & player reference

Prize pool = $20 multiplied by the number of paid players.

Payout shares

1st place receives 60% of the prize pool, 2nd receives 30%, and 3rd receives 10%. The following examples assume every listed player has paid the tournament entry. Neither the $5 green fee nor the $10 entertainment cover is added to the pool.

Players	Prize pool	1st - 60%	2nd - 30%	3rd - 10%
10	$200	$120	$60	$20
11	$220	$132	$66	$22
12	$240	$144	$72	$24
13	$260	$156	$78	$26
14	$280	$168	$84	$28
15	$300	$180	$90	$30
16	$320	$192	$96	$32
17	$340	$204	$102	$34
18	$360	$216	$108	$36
19	$380	$228	$114	$38
20	$400	$240	$120	$40

Player checklist

Sign up and prepay in person by Friday at 6 PM Eastern. Be ready for the 7 PM start. Listen for your match and table assignment, report within 10 minutes, and confirm the first breaker before playing. Play each match as a race to 3; the rack winner breaks next. No jump or masse shots. Report the match score to staff.

Reference and rule priority

These explanations follow the specific 9-Ball Game Rules linked for this event, with the companion 8-Ball Game Rules used only for the general foul provisions it incorporates. They do not substitute 8-ball winning conditions, stripes/solids rules, or 8-ball break restrictions into 9-ball. The Backbeat's event format, entry fees, winner-breaks rule, finals reset, reporting window, and shot prohibitions take priority.

Original reference documents

9-Ball Game Rules

Companion 8-Ball Game Rules (general foul provisions)