

Baseball pocket billiards

Baseball pocket billiards or **baseball pool** (sometimes, in context, referred to simply as **baseball**) is a pocket billiards (pool) game suitable for multiple players that borrows phraseology and even some aspects of form from the game of baseball. For instance, although baseball pool is played on a standard pool table, the 9 ball is known as the "pitcher", the table's foot spot where balls are racked is known as "home plate", and each team or player is afforded "nine innings" to score as many "runs" as possible.^{[1][2][3]}

Baseball pocket billiards has been in existence since at least 1912, when Brunswick soberly described it in a pamphlet as "the most fascinating game of the twentieth century."^[1] The game has relatively simple rules. The winner is the player with the highest run tally after all players have taken nine turns at bat".^[1]

Although never one of the most popular billiards pursuits, and more well known in the early- to mid-20th century, the game has been featured in well-advertised public tournaments. For example, in 1922, the Pennsylvania Railroad System hosted a large scale "Indoor Championships" sports tourney in Columbus, Ohio, with more than 1,500 contestants competing at 15 events, including baseball pocket billiards, for an audience of approximately 20,000 spectators.^[4]



The extra balls of baseball pocket billiards.

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Gameplay

Set-up

Baseball pocket billiards is played with 21 numbered object balls. Since a standard set of pool balls is numbered 1 through 15, sets of balls numbered 16 through 21, known as "baseball sets", have been marketed specifically for the game, along with the oversized triangle racks needed for proper racking. The balls are racked at the foot end of a pool table, with the apex ball of the triangle centered over the foot spot ("home plate").^[2]

Viewed from the racker's vantage point, the 1-ball is placed at the triangle's apex, the 2-ball at the right corner, and the 3-ball at the left corner. The 9-ball, called the "pitcher", is placed at what would be the center of the rack if the game were to be played with 15 balls. All other balls are placed randomly. Because most physical



Full setup

racks only accommodate 15 balls, the last row of balls may be placed manually after placement with a standard triangle. The opening break and subsequent breaks, if any (*see infra*), are performed with the cue ball in hand from the kitchen (behind the table's head string).^[2]

Object of the game

Baseball pocket billiards is a call-shot game, meaning a player must call the ball to be hit and the intended pocket on all shots but for the break. Any incidental balls pocketed on a successful called shot count in the player's favor but must be spotted to home plate if unsuccessful. Each player is allowed nine innings at the table, played in succession, in which to score as many runs as possible. The game ends when all players have completed their rounds. The winner is the player with the most runs after all have finished their turn "at bat".^[2]

Scoring

Each legally pocketed balls garners the shooter the numerical face value of the ball. For example, pocketing the 2- and 15-balls during an inning results in a score of 17 runs for that visit. Scores must be contemporaneously recorded on a score sheet with the total tally for each inning marked. If a player pockets all 21 balls before his inning allotment ends, the balls are re-racked and play continues, with a re-break from the kitchen. Each inning continues until a player misses a ball or commits foul.

Penalty for fouls

The penalty for a foul is a loss of turn, no score for the ball or balls pocketed on the fouled stroke, *as well as* no score for the immediately preceding pocketed ball during *any inning*. This means that if a player did not legally pocket a ball on the stroke preceding the foul, the last ball pocketed in the last scoring inning is spotted and subtracted from that prior inning's score. All balls pocketed on a fouled stroke are spotted to home plate. If the player has not yet made any balls at the time of the foul, the first subsequent ball pocketed is spotted at the inning's conclusion and does not count toward the player's score.^[2]

References

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