

DEFENSIVE SHOTS IN 9-BALL



Over the years, there have been many questions and misinterpretations concerning the Defensive Shots block on the Scoresheet. Marking Defensive Shots both consistently and correctly ensures the effectiveness of The Equalizer® scoring and handicap system, so it's very important! The failure to correctly mark Defensive Shots when scoring matches is an irregularity. Penalties may be imposed by Local Management, Handicap Review Committees, and/or the American Poolplayers Association (APA), on teams or players who are not conscientious of this issue.

Some players do not have a clear understanding of what constitutes a Defensive Shot. A Defensive Shot (also called a Safety) is a shot where there is no INTENT to pocket a ball. INTENT is the key word and certainly leaves room for judgment. This is why both teams have a scoresheet. It is not necessary for both scoresheets to agree on the number of Defensive Shots. If you feel your opponent did not intend to pocket a ball, mark a Defensive Shot. *Note: An inning consists of one turn for each player, even if it's a Defensive Shot.*

Here are some typical situations that are considered Defensive Shots:

- A player does not have what he feels is a makeable shot and decides to leave his opponent in a difficult situation rather than attempt a bad shot.
- A player shoots the object ball softly to a rail or other position that makes it a more difficult shot for his opponent, therefore not intending to make the ball.
- A player is well ahead in a game or match and decides to purposely miss a few shots. This is unethical and is a form of cheating, called sandbagging, which could disqualify a player or team. In 9-Ball, this is particularly risky as well because it gives the opponent the opportunity to win extra points for his or her team. The way to prevent sandbagging is to mark these Defensive Shots. If every member did so, no one would bother to sandbag. It would be pointless.

Here are some examples that are NOT Defensive Shots:

- A beginner/weak player misses shots while trying to make them.
- A player is left with a virtually impossible shot but does the best he can to try to make it anyway.
- A player is left "hooked" (or "snookered"), hidden in such a manner that he is unable to shoot directly at the object ball. He "kicks" as best he can, but doesn't make contact with the object ball. The scorekeeper must then decide the player's INTENT. Did he shoot hard enough to make the ball if he had made contact, (which could NOT be considered a Defensive Shot) or did he shoot just hard enough to get the ball to go to a rail to avoid giving up ball-in-hand (which IS a Defensive Shot)? This is a judgment call.

Whether or not the object ball goes in the pocket should not be the deciding factor. Whether or not the player INTENDED to pass his turn to the other player on purpose is the deciding factor. Missing on purpose can be ethical or unethical, but that is not the issue. IF, IN THE SCOREKEEPER'S OPINION, A PLAYER DID NOT INTEND TO POCKET A BALL, MARK IT AS A DEFENSIVE SHOT.