

# Chaser

*A Fine Pastime From the Expert Hands and Minds at Infanteam*

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## THE BASICS:

Chaser is a game of pool where the objective is to pocket the balls in ascending order. Any number of players can play at once.

At every shot, the white cue ball has to hit the lowest numbered ball on the table (the *Target* to chase) *before* touching any of the other remaining balls. You receive points equal to the number on every ball that goes down a pocket, as long as you made a legal shot.

*Fouls:* If you fail to hit the target first or pocket the white ball, a penalty is drawn from your score. The penalty is equal to the highest numbered ball you hit out of sequence, or pocket during the failed shot - but never less than 4.

Balls pocketed out of sequence are always returned to the table.

A player keeps shooting until they fail to pocket a ball, or make a Foul. After a Foul, the next player can choose to make the shot as normally, or have the fouling player shoot again – possibly for another penalty.

## THE DETAILS:

### **Who can play and where?**

A game of Chaser is played on a standard pool table with 6 pockets, between 2 or more players, with all 15 colored and numbered balls and one white cue ball.

### **For how long? Who wins?**

The game goes on until all 15 balls are shot down, in sequence. The winner is the player with the most points <sup>1</sup>.

### **How do you score points?**

By making a legal shot where at least one (colored, not white) ball is shot down. If you shoot down more than one, you score the sum of the number on all the balls shot down.

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<sup>1</sup> Above zero, since finishing with a negative score is not uncommon, even for very very experienced players.

### What is a legal shot?

The lowest numbered ball on the table at any time is called the Target. In a legal shot, you shoot the white cue ball and hit the Target *first* – before touching any other ball and without anything else noted under “Illegal shots” happening. In other words, a legal shot is a shot where the white ball does hit the Target, hits it without hitting other balls first, and is not shot down in a pocket or off the table.

### What happens after you’ve made a legal shot?

- If no balls were shot down: no score, and it’s the next player’s turn.
- If any balls were (legally) shot down, including the Target:
  - o First, note your score: the sum of numbers on the balls that were pocketed
  - o Then, if any balls were shot down *other than the Target*, return them to the table as described under “Returning colored balls”. If the Target was shot down, it stays down. The next lowest-numbered ball on the table becomes the new Target.
  - o Then, you can shoot again.

### What is an illegal shot?

An illegal shot is called a Foul. A Foul is when “something goes wrong”, specifically if any of these events occur (and any of them will turn an otherwise legal shot into a Foul):

- The white ball misses the Target,
- The white ball touches another ball before hitting the Target,
- The white ball is shot down.
- Any ball jumps off the table,
- Or, anything that would otherwise not be legal in a game of regular eight-ball pool (such as touching the cue ball a second time or in motion, with any body part, object or clothing, shooting with any other ball but the white one etc).

### What happens after an illegal shot / a Foul?

- The player who made the shot is punished with a Penalty: a negative score / subtracting points from the player’s score. Yes, you can have a score below 0.
- If the Target was pocketed, it stays down, and the next ball becomes the Target. Return any other balls that were shot down to the table.
- It’s the next player’s turn (if he/she accepts it. After a Foul, he/she *may* pass the turn back to you if the position is bad. More on this in “passing back a turn”).

### How bad is the Penalty?

The Penalty is always *at least 4 points*. But it may be even worse if a numbered ball with a higher number than 4 is involved:

- Missing the Target: the number on the Target
- Touching another ball before the Target: the number on that other ball
- Any numbered ball was shot off the table: the number on that ball
- Any ball was (otherwise legally) shot down in a Foul: the number on that ball

If several of these events happen at once, they do *not* add up<sup>2</sup>; you’re only given *one Penalty*. Choose the Penalty for the highest numbered ball involved in the Foul, and at least 4. In other words, the penalty is always a number between 4 and 15.

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<sup>2</sup> The only exception to this is the opening shot, where the shooting player may choose to risk it.

### **Passing back a turn after a Foul**

Usually, after a Foul you lose your turn to the next player, player X. However, *after you've made a Foul* (and only then) player X is free to choose to give the turn *back* to you – usually forcing you to make another difficult shot and possibly getting another penalty. Player X can do this for as long as you keep making Fouls.

If you score legally on a shot you've been passed back from player X, you get the score and a new shot as in a regular turn.

After you've made a legal shot, it's player X's turn (and now, he must accept it).

### **Snooking**

A Snook is when the white ball after a legal shot ends up in a position where there is no possible direct path to the Target. Nothing in particular happens here, but the player making the shot will be vulnerable to a penalty.

Doing this on purpose with a legal shot ("Snooking the next player") is a common strategy early in the game, because there are many colored balls to obstruct the path between the white ball and the Target. A Foul where the white ball ends up in a Snook is the most common reason for the next player to pass the turn back to the previous player ("Snooking yourself").

### **Returning colored balls to the table**

Colored balls *except the Target* are returned to the table whenever they are shot down. The target stays down, and the next ball becomes the new Target to chase. All colored balls (including the Target) are of course returned if they are shot off the table.

Position: they should be placed as close as possible (without moving other balls on the table) to the Foot Spot (the point that was the front corner in the beginning triangle). If more than one ball was shot down, or if the space is occupied by other balls on the table, the next balls are placed from there in a straight line backwards toward the back edge of the table. If more than one ball is returned, start with the lowest numbered, and go backwards in sequence.

Note that this can sometimes produce a Snook, if a ball is returned to a position between the white ball and the (next) Target. As usual, if the previous shot was a legal and scoring shot, the player must shoot again - he/she may *not* pass the turn to the next player. If the previous shot was a Foul, the next player may pass it back at will.

### **Returning the white ball to the table, and doing the next shot**

The white ball is returned whenever shot down or off the table. It should be placed in the starting area on the table (inside the Kitchen area), wherever the shooting player chooses.

It can be shot in any direction, but may not hit any colored ball before leaving the Kitchen area. This means that if the Target ball is inside the starting area, it's a Snook.

### **Setting up the game**

The balls are set up in a triangle like in regular pool – but with these variations:

- The balls 1, 2 and 3 are the outer corners of the triangle, and 1 is at the front corner (the Foot Spot).
- The balls 13, 14 and 15 are in the middle, and 15 is right behind 1 (where 8 is placed in regular pool).

### **Scoring the first shot**

Before shooting, the player who makes the first shot chooses one of two ways of scoring the first shot:

- *Safe*: if more than one ball is legally shot down, he/she gets points for *only* the most valuable ball. In case of a Foul, the Penalty will be as usual (*only* the worst one of the numbers involved).
- *Ballsy*: if more than one ball is legally shot down, he/she gets the sum total of balls shot down (as usual). But if the shot is a Foul, the Penalty is summed up: the sum total of the penalties for every illegal event in that shot!

After the first shot, scoring is as usual, as described earlier.

### **Sequence of the players' turns**

It's recommended (but not necessary) to jumble or vary the sequence of players from one game to the next, since the ability to Snook the *next* player can have a big impact on the next player's score.

One suggestion is to play in the sequence of scoring from the previous game – lowest to highest.

More terms: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glossary\\_of\\_cue\\_sports\\_terms](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glossary_of_cue_sports_terms)