

= Kelly pool =

Kelly pool (also known as pea pool , pill pool , keeley , the keilley game , and killy) is a pocket billiards game played on a standard pool table using fifteen numbered markers called peas or pills , and a standard set of sixteen pool balls . Gameplay involves players drawing peas at random from a shake bottle , which assigns to them the correspondingly numbered pool ball , kept secret from their opponents , but which they must pocket in order to win the game . Kelly pool is a rotation game , which means that players must contact the lowest numbered object ball on each shot first until the opportunity to pocket their own is presented . Two rule variants are set forth under rules promulgated by the Billiard Congress of America (BCA) . In the simpler form , the object of play starts and ends with the goal of pocketing one 's secret ball . In the second , in addition to the goal of pocketing one 's secret ball , points are scored in various ways . In the instance where pills are unavailable , a cloth may be used to cover the balls , which are then chosen blindly , recorded , and replaced for play .

Reportedly invented by Chicagoan Calistus " Kelly " Mulvaney in 1893 , kelly pool was a popular game during the early- to mid @-@ 20th century . Mentions of it were at one time common in US newspapers , often painting it in a negative light as its play was considered a stronghold of gambling . Authorities in various parts of the United States at times called for a moratorium on the game 's play . Until 1964 , in fact , playing the game was a fineable offense in the state of Montana .

Many billiard @-@ specific and etymological sources point to kelly pool , or an early version of the game called kelly rotation , as the origin of the common idiom , " behind the eight ball " . Some publications blithely assume the expression to be eponymously derived from the game of eight ball , but it has been pointed out that the expression came into use before eight ball was popularized , and that the game did not even use an actual 8 ball under the version first marketed to the public . The predecessor to the BCA , The National Billiard Association , meanwhile , holds that the expression simply emanates from the fact that the eight ball , being black @-@ colored , is harder to see than other balls , thus resulting in an association with any difficult position .

= = Origins = =

According to an article which appeared in the June 29 , 1913 edition of the Chicago Tribune , " Kelly pool was invented by Kelly Mulvaney " . The quote is attributed in the article to Hugh E. Keough , a well @-@ known Chicago sportswriter of 31 years . Further information is provided in a November 10 , 1916 Indianapolis Star obituary for one Calistus Mulvaney , who is listed as having died the preceding day . The obituary , entitled " Originated ' Kelly Pool ' " , states that : " ... for thirty five years [Mulvaney] was identified with Kelly pool in the loop district ... He was widely known as the father of ' Kelly pool ' and better known as Kelly Mulvaney than Calistus . He was born at Fox Lake Wis [consin] sixty @-@ five years ago . "

In Calistus Mulvaney 's entry in the 1910 United States Census (pictured at right) , his occupation is listed as " billiard hall emp [loyee] " and his position there as " keeper " . As part of the same household , Mulvaney 's brother @-@ in @-@ law 's listing appears on the same census page , with his occupation and position identically recorded . The census records Mulvaney 's age in 1910 as 56 , his birthdate as " about 1854 " , his birthplace as Wisconsin , his spouse 's name as Kate , and his area of residence at that time as Chicago Ward 14 , Cook Co . , Illinois . Although there is a given @-@ name discrepancy , additional illumination is provided by Simpson M. Ritter in the publication From the Annals of Sports . As Simpson is quoted in the book Sports in the Pulp Magazines by John A. Dinan :

You may not be surprised to learn that Kelly Pool was neither invented by a man named Kelly nor is it of Irish origin . Its inventor , Celestus [sic] Mulvaney , was of Irish origin but invented the game in 1893 in Chicago . The first games were played in that city at the Hannah and Hoggs Billiard Hall on Madison St.

= = Gameplay = =

Kelly pool accommodates players with a wide variety of skill levels . The game is designed for group play with a minimum of 2 players , best suited for 4 ? 6 , but allowing up to 15 to take part . The Billiard Congress of America (BCA) publishes a long @-@ standardized set of rules for the game .

== Set up ==

At the start of kelly pool , the numbered markers (commonly called peas or pills , and sometimes tally balls or shake balls) are placed in a specially made , narrow @-@ necked container (called variously a bottle , pea bottle , pill bottle , kelly bottle , tally bottle or shake bottle) which is shaken to randomly distribute them . Each player then draws a numbered pea from the bottle . The number of the pea drawn assigns to that player the correspondingly numbered object ball , which that player must keep secret from his opponents . The object of the game is for the player to legally pocket their assigned , undisclosed ball (sometimes called their " private number ") .

At the start of the game a standard set of fifteen pool object balls are racked at the foot end of a pool table , with the apex ball of the rack centered over the foot spot . Viewed from the racker 's vantage point , the 1 ball is placed at the rack 's apex , the 2 ball at the rack 's right corner and the 3 ball at the rack 's left corner (as in the game of rotation) ; all other object balls are placed randomly . An open break is required , meaning that at least four balls must be driven to rails (as opposed to a safety break , such as is used for the opening break in straight pool and one @-@ pocket) .

== Rules of play ==

Kelly pool is a rotation game , which means that the lowest numbered ball on the table must be contacted by the cue ball on every shot . There are no called safeties in kelly pool ; the legal pocketing (i.e. , with no foul committed on the same stroke) of the lowest numbered ball on the table , permits and requires the shooter to continue play . When a ball is illegally pocketed it is spotted to the foot spot (or as close as possible , toward the foot rail) .

If a foul is committed , there is no point penalty and the incoming player has the option of accepting the table in position , or requiring the offending player to continue shooting . However , when the foul is the result of jumping the cue ball off the table , or scratching it into a pocket , the incoming player has cue ball in hand from the kitchen (behind the head string) , and retains the option of forcing the opponent to shoot . Whichever player ultimately shoots with cue ball in hand has the option of spotting the object ball to the foot spot if it is in the kitchen area .

== Scoring ==

There are two main scoring variations ; under the first and simpler ruleset , the first player to pocket his private number wins . Under the second variation , although a player still wins by pocketing his private number , points are scored in various ways : 1) two points are given by each participant to the winning player for the pocketing of his private number ; 2) a player receives one point for pocketing any other player 's private number , and the player whose private number was pocketed is penalized one point (and can have a negative point total) , but is not out of the game and can still win points in this way ; 3) if a player whose private number is pocketed by another does not disclose this fact before a subsequent shot is taken , the non @-@ disclosing player forfeits , immediately losing the game , and the player who made that ball is given two points instead of one . In the event that no player succeeds in pocketing his private number , gameplay ends when the last private number is potted , and the game is played again with all points values doubled .

== Association with gambling ==

Kelly pool has long been associated with gambling ? so much so , that it was made illegal in some

municipalities in the US and Canada . In the state of Montana , for example , the playing of kelly pool was punishable by a \$ 25 fine until the law was repealed in 1964 . Likewise , the playing of kelly pool was banned in the Canadian province of Manitoba at least as of 1918 . Gambling exploits associated with kelly pool were often depicted in Clare Briggs ' comic strip of the same name , which centered on the game . The Kelly Pool strip (panel pictured at right) , ran in the New York Tribune 's sports section from 1912 to 1917 .

From the early- to mid @-@ 20th century numerous newspaper stories cover indictments of kelly pool as a bastion of gambling . In February 1908 , the county attorney of Oklahoma City denounced kelly pool , declaring " that it comes with in [sic] the pale of the law against gambling " , and issued orders to the city 's sheriff 's department to enforce a moratorium . In April 1912 a Vincennes , Indiana resident was indicted for embezzling \$ 11 @,@ 000 from the brick company he managed reportedly due " to his infatuation with ' pea ' pool and shaking dice " . The following month , Mayor Mudge of Edwardsville , Illinois announced that " effective at once ... poolrooms ... must do away with all forms of gambling , including Kelly Pool . " In the same vein , in 1914 Judge J.A. McIlvaine of a Washington , Pennsylvania court , in passing sentence on a pool room proprietor who allowed pea pool games to be wagered on in his establishment , announced that persons committing similar crimes would " be severely punished ... This is the most pernicious form of gambling for it starts youths to higher grades of crime . "

In January 1916 a Washington D.C. billiard hall proprietor was fined \$ 100 by a Police Court judge for allowing the game to be played at his establishment . The United States Attorney handling the case told reporters " There is considerable playing of this Kelly pool in the poolrooms of the city , where many young men lose their entire week 's wages on a single Saturday night , and I propose to have it stopped , if possible . " In April 1922 , Charleston , West Virginia 's then mayor , Grant P. Hall , declared " baseball pools , pay @-@ ball , Kelly pool and all other forms of gambling in billiard parlors and cigar stores must cease forthwith . " Likewise , in December of the same year , Oxford , Ohio 's then mayor , J. M. Hughes , declared a war on all forms of gambling , announcing in the local newspaper that " schemes of chance ... [including] Kelly pool ... are contrary to law . " In 1934 , sports promoter and notorious gambler Jack Doyle 's billiard establishment was raided and he , along with 14 patrons , were arrested for placing bets on Kelly pool .

= = " Behind the eight ball " = =

" Behind the eight ball " (or " behind the eight ") is a common idiom meaning to be in trouble , stymied or thwarted , in an awkward position or out of luck . It is often assumed that the expression derives from the inability to use the 8 ball in a combination in the game of eight @-@ ball ? if the cue ball is directly behind the 8 ball a player has no direct shot route . However , numerous billiards @-@ specific and etymological publications state that the expression derives instead from kelly pool , or an early version of kelly pool called kelly rotation .

Billiards historian Michael Ian Shamos in The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Billiards (1993) , citing information provided by Charles C. Peterson (first president of the Billiard Association of America) , and Steve Mizerak and Michael E. Panozzo in Steve Mizerak 's Complete Book of Pool (1990) , indicate that ascribing the phrase 's origin to the game of eight ball results in an anachronism , the phrase being traceable to at least 1919 , while the form of game that became " eight @-@ ball " was not described by that name , and its rules were not published in any official rule book , until after 1940 . The game that would ultimately be named " eight ball , " after a physical 8 ball became part of play , was invented shortly after 1900 . That precursor game was little known until it was popularized in 1925 under the name B.B.C. Co . Pool by the Brunswick @-@ Balke @-@ Collender Company , marketed by them with a special set of balls that did not have a numbered 8 ball , but rather came with a ball set consisting of seven of one color , seven of another , and an unnumbered black ball . Thus , multiple @-@ time world champion Steve Mizerak explains that behind the eight ball cannot derive from the game of eight ball as " the phrase predates the game ... by at least 20 years . "

Two different kelly pool @-@ based derivations for behind the eight ball are provided in diverse sources . As noted , in kelly pool each player is randomly assigned a specific ball of the fifteen ball

rack , which must be made in numerical order . The game ends when any player makes his assigned ball . Based on these rules , one origin theory holds that when a large number of players are participating , players assigned balls numerically higher than 8 ? that is , balls that are behind the 8 ball in order ? have little chance of winning . This is a result of the likelihood that random distribution will result in multiple players with assigned balls numbered lower than 8 having an opportunity to shoot first , and that with such large a number of players at least one will come to the table with the opportunity to shoot at his assigned ball .

A second theory refers to a kelly pool rule variation under which the 8 ball is excluded from assignment as a secret number and , if another ball strikes the 8 ball at any time during play , the player responsible is penalized . " So a position directly behind the eight ball is a position of great hazard . "

A more generic origin of the phrase that is independent of any particular game 's rule , instead depending from a property of the 8 ball itself , is proffered by Billiard Congress of America predecessor , The National Billiard Association , which organization was the governing body of American billiards from 1921 to 1941 :

It is generally conceded that the 8 @-@ ball is the most difficult for the player to see clearly in the execution of his shot . This , because it is black , naturally the edges of the ball , or in fact any part of the ball , do not stand out as clearly as colored . Therefore , professional players , if possible , avoid being forced to play the 8 @-@ ball from a difficult position or with the cue ball a long distance from the 8 @-@ ball because it is more difficult to see clearly . In reality , this fact was what started the now common saying , ' behind the eight ball , ' used in the player 's vernacular in the sense that being in any kind of a difficult point on the table , many times calls for the remark that one is ' behind the eight ball . ' In other words , they use this to explain any difficult situation that may confront them in the game .

In the game of snooker , the roughly equivalent idiom is " snookered " , and it too has entered the language (especially Commonwealth English of various forms in countries where snooker is a major sport) as a metaphor .