

# POOL TABLE CARE GUIDE

## COIN OPERATION



## TABLE CARE

**In premium pool sites, keeping the tables and accessories up to scratch is vital. If the table looks good players will be attracted to it. A torn and dirty cloth or cues with no tips will put off all but the determined customer.**

**But more than this, good cloth, proper cues and the right number of balls will speed the games up and increase the income.**

### Cloth

An English pool table will likely have a wool, napped cloth. That is, a directional cloth, smooth running away from the baulk end and rough, against the nap on the way back up the table. It is essential thos cloth is brushed with the nap, down the table. For American pool, forget about brushing the right way, ironing and marking the 'D'. The cloth is 'speedcloth'. It has a high nylon content and no 'direction' to the fibres. The balls run fast in every direction.

- 1** A daily brush and vacuum will reduce wear, chalk dust is sharp and cuts cloth. Because speedcloth has no nap, it does not shed fibres like wool cloth. Therefore stains will not reduce with brushing. However, the cloth will not wear out as quickly and will not cut and nick. Using the correct colour chalk will obviously help to reduce marking.
- 2** Within a short time, new cloth will show white spots. These are impact marks from dropped balls or cue stabs, or even melt marks where spinning balls heat to a high temperature. The cloth is not worn out. Over time these marks will become less evident. Wool cloth may 'pill' or go bobbly. This is more common with cheaper cloth, but is a feature of wool fabrics.
- 3** Regular use of a cloth cleaner will help with beer stains etc. Mist on the spray and wipe with a clean cloth. Sponging with water will generally only dilute and spread a stain.
- 4** English pool has a variety of rule sets, some require a baulk line other a 'D' as well. Always check with the site what the house rules are.
- 5** American pool of all rule variants only requires marking 2 spots. One is the baulk spot, from behind which the cue ball is placed for breaking. The other is the foot spot, which marks the position of the front ball of the rack, not the 8 ball. Players will of course play their own rules. A head string line through the baulk spot is acceptable. An American playing area is exactly 2 x 1, imagine the table is a domino piece, the double One, that will locate the spots!

- 6 Periodically, a full valet is advisable. With the top frame raised, the cloth can be thoroughly treated and the debris is not brushed only under the cushions and into the pockets. Dirt in the pockets inevitably finds its way into the ball runs and may affect the path and delivery of the balls.

## Balls

American pool uses a 57mm ball; only 7mm larger than an English ball, but one and half times its weight. The American game is also played harder and faster. Consequently, the table, cues, cloth and balls take more punishment.

- 1 Cheap balls will pit, chip and even split. They discolour more quickly and if not accurately ground, run unevenly or cause problems inside the table.
- 2 The cue ball has a metal core. This is diverted away from the ball tray by a magnet. The ball may very infrequently fall in with the object balls. This can occur if several balls run down together or if the runs are dirty or obstructed. If this happens repeatedly then the ball may be damaged or more likely, is not the correct quality. All SAM tables from 2004 on should use a SAM cue ball branded with the SAM 'ball & shadow' logo. If in doubt, the new SAM ball carrying the name 'SAM' works in all SAM tables
- 3 The cue ball should be retained at the end of each game. Adjustment is possible to ensure this and reduce the risk of theft.
- 4 Periodic cleaning and polishing the balls is advisable for both visual and mechanical reasons. Cleaning the ball tray and runs will also help keep the balls clean.

## Cues

The greater punishment the cues and their tips take in American pool means they must be more robust.

- 1 Ramin wood is acceptable providing the shaft is thicker than standard English pool cues, but Maple is a better choice.
- 2 The tips must be a minimum 12mm. Normal English cues are 11mm. Bigger tips help a better contact when striking the ball. Miscuing is discouraging to novice players. It also leads to cloth damage.
- 3 The ferrule the tip screws into must be plastic and not brass, and the thread itself plastic. This soaks up more impact and protects the cue shaft. It is easier and cheaper to replace tips than cues. Where brass ferrules are used, tips will break quicker and the metal will cut and damage the cloth.

- 4 Cues must be accessible. Cues on show encourage impulse play. Keeping cues behind the bar, particularly an unmanned bar, will reduce potential revenue. Always remove incorrect or damaged cues from the rack. Ensure there are at least 2 serviceable cues per table.

## Chalk

Always ensure there is chalk available.

- 1 The correct colour will help reduce cloth marking.
- 2 Without chalk, miscuing will result. The game is less satisfying, it will take longer, customers will vote with their feet. Revenue will be affected and cloth may be damaged.
- 3 Yes, chalk goes missing. But it seldom leaves the premises. Check inside the table next time the top is raised!

## The pool table daily checklist

**Brush the cloth and vacuum the pockets/under the rails** - Check the spots are in place and note any damage. Is the cloth loose or coming away at the pockets? Is a recloth needed soon or is there more serious damage requiring attention? Alert the table operator to any problems.

SAM's TriBand system means a daily valet period is possible. Alternatively, a promotional token can be used for the same purpose. Before opening each day the balls should be vended. Each set should be checked to make sure it contains not just the right number of spots and stripes, but the full numbered sets. Damaged or missing balls must be replaced. If the set is dirty, a note can be made to clean and polish them at the next opportunity. Once checked the balls can be returned to the table or left racked for a free first game of the day.

**This will encourage the early birds.**

**Check the cue rack has sufficient cues** - Use the rack, cues lying on tables or leaning against walls look untidy and will warp. Check the tips are intact, removing damaged cues. Always roughen up a new cue tip with sandpaper to help it take chalk.

**Ensure there is enough chalk available.**

**Check the table has suffered no damage** - Vandalism to the coin door may have damaged the internal mechanisms and cause coin handling problems. Defaced Price of Play labels will confuse customers and may lead to refund claims.

**Test the top frame for security** - Try and move the cushion sections. If they lift it is likely not all the clamps are properly secured. It may seem easier to just attach a couple of clamps so its easier to lift the top when needed. But this seriously affects the cushion response, spoiling the game, and can also compromise security. There are clamps either side of every pocket.

**Press the play button** - It should light up for a second. If it doesn't the table may not be working properly. Try a token to ensure the balls vend. Better to call an engineer early than lose a day's revenue.

This may seem a time consuming regime, but it need not be if done regularly, and it is all really common sense. You have the best product for your environment with the highest earning potential. Minimal housekeeping will help it realise this potential. However, poor maintenance can **seriously** affect the contents of the cash box



*We hope you have found this guide useful  
Please contact us on the details below  
if you have any further questions  
about our product range*



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