



# Defensive Shots



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 Equalizersm handicap and scoring system, so it’s very important! The failure to correctly mark Defensive Shots when scoring matches is an irregularity. Local Management, Handicap Advisory Committees, and/or the American Poolplayers Association (APA) may impose penalties, 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 isn’t necessary for both scoresheets to agree on the number of Defensive Shots. If you feel either player did not intend to pocket one of their balls, you should mark a Defensive Shot for that player. Remember, you are keeping score of the match, not your (or their) player.

**NOTE: INNINGS ARE MARKED FOR EVERY TURN, EVEN IF A DEFENSIVE SHOT OCCURS.**

## **SOME TYPICAL SITUATIONS THAT ARE CONSIDERED DEFENSIVE SHOTS ARE:**

- A player does not have what they feel is a makeable shot and decides to leave their opponent in a difficult situation rather than attempt a bad shot.
- A player shoots one of their object balls softly up near a corner to block their 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, that could disqualify a player or team. The way to prevent this type of sandbagging is to mark the purposely missed shots (no intent to pocket a ball) as Defensive Shots. If every member did so, no one would bother to sandbag as 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 they can to try to make it anyway;
- A player is left “hooked” (or snookered), hidden in such a manner that they are unable to shoot directly at one of their object balls. They “kick” as best they can, but don’t make contact with one of their balls. The scorekeeper must then decide the player’s INTENT. Did they shoot hard enough to make the ball if they had made contact (which would NOT be considered a Defensive Shot) or did they 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 their turn to the other player on purpose, without giving up ball-in-hand, 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 ONE OF THEIR BALLS, MARK IT AS A DEFENSIVE SHOT.**