

HOW TO PURCHASE A POOL TABLE

BY BLATT BILLIARDS

The below literature is an in-depth researcher's guide for someone looking to purchase a pool table for their home, for a client, or for a friend. Our goal is to help you make the most educated decision.

Similar to other furniture (couches, dining tables, dressers, bedframes etc.), a pool table is a large investment with regards to economics, home décor/design, and time spent enjoying your table.

With 100 years of experience, here is what we find to be the most important questions and initial steps in no particular order:

1. **Size** – What size pool table is best for me and for my space? Do I have enough space?
2. **Table Properties** (Slate, Rubber, Frame) – What makes a pool table, a good pool table? How do I know, I am purchasing one of quality?
3. **Budget** – How do I find a great table with regards to style, and quality that is in my price-range? The difference between Blatt's Elite Custom, Semi-Custom and Value Collections.

Size

To begin, the most common pool tables sizes found in the market are 6 Foot, 7 Foot, 8 Foot, 8.5 Foot (also referred to as 8 Foot Pro), and 9 Foot. Only 8 Foot, 8.5 and 9 Foot are considered regulation sizes (see regulation notes below). 9 Foot is considered to be a professional tournament size pool table (Pool Hall, Professional Leagues).

6 Foot pool tables are more commonly found in bar/restaurant environments. We usually do not recommend this size for competitive/entertainment purposes unless your space is very small. If your space is small/tight – we may first recommend reviewing a 7 Foot model with shorter cue stick lengths to help adapt to lack of space or obstructions.

The 9 Foot Model is considered a tournament size table, the “Real McCoy” if you will. This size is best for those who have a very large space, are skilled/competitive players, and those looking for a true sized professional pool table. If you have ever visited a pool hall, or seen movies such as *The Hustler*, or *The Color of Money* – this is the size they compete on.

The 8 Foot Model is **the most popular sized pool table** sold today for homes, or amenity spaces. We like to refer to it as the “not too big, not too small size”. It’s a great size for competitive/skilled players, but also accommodates entertaining average players who may consist of your friends, or family members. It’s easier to entertain a larger audience on an 8 Foot versus a 9 Foot model (easier play, faster games).

The 8.5 Foot Model is a bit more rare, as not all pool tables are offered in this size, and it’s usually sold when someone would like to purchase a 9 Foot pool table, but do not quite have the space for it.

Quick Important Sizing Note: In the “billiards table world” tables sizes are not literally proportional to their size/name. For example, 7 Foot Tables are not 3.5 Feet x 7 Feet, 8 Foot tables are not 4 Feet x 8 Feet, and 9 Foot tables are not 4.5 Feet x 9 Feet. They do fall within a similar dimensional range, but we will get to the exact measurements momentarily and how they are defined.

The Billiards Congress of America (BCA), only regulates three sizes: 8 Foot, 8.5 Foot, and 9 Foot. What do we mean by regulates? This means that no matter where you purchase your pool table from or who the maker is, the ball playing area on these three sizes are always the same per pool table size selected.

The playing area is defined as the exact surface area on the pool table where the pool balls roll and bounce/hit inside the rubber rails. It is not the overall length x width of the pool table, but exactly inside rubber to inside rubber. The playing area is where your cue stick begins on the table, which is why it’s typically best to use the playing area for floor planning.

Every single 8 Foot Pool Table model has a playing area of 44 Inches x 88 Inches, every single 8.5 Foot Pool Table model has a playing area of 46 Inches x 92 Inches

and lastly, every single 9 Foot Pool Table model has a playing area of 50 Inches x 100 Inches.

7 Foot Pool Tables are not professionally regulated, and the playing area will vary from maker to maker, but typically within 36 Inches – 39 Inches x 76 Inches – 78 Inches.

The playing area is the most important factor when determining the right size table rather than the actual outside dimensions of the pool table. The reason is the playing area is where your cue stick begins, and in turn, this will tell you what in the room (walls, support beams, furniture) may be in the way or an obstacle when shooting pool. The overall/outside dimension or footprint of the pool table is generally more important to walking space, or general layout aesthetics, but not for determining the table playing size that best fits.

For CAD layouts, or physically using blue tape or measuring tape – place the playing area dimension(s) into the floor plan drawing or on the physical floor. Once the playing area is on the floor plan, we can then measure the distance from each angle of the edge of the playing area to the surroundings. This will determine what cue stick length with what table size will work best together.

A pro-regulation cue stick is approximately 58 inches long. The following sizes most commonly sold are then 52 inches long, 48 inches long, 42 inches long, and lastly 36 inches long.

There is nothing inhibiting to the game of pool with a shorter cue stick, but ideally, your cue length would be 48 inches to 58 inches long for best ball control. Having an assortment of lengths to accommodate one's layout is very common. Do not feel going with a larger table size, and short cue sticks is the wrong decision. The shorter cue sticks may allow one to purchase their preferred larger pool table.

Blatt Billiards provides full CAD services, and room size guidance.

Table Properties

What are contributing factors to higher quality pool tables?

In no particular order, the most common factors to review are your table's **Slate, Frame, Rubber, Pocket Size, and Materials/Finishes.**

While different customization factors such as wood species, materials, and finishes may alter the table costs or quality as a piece of furniture – it must first play as a precision instrument internally.

- **Slate/Frame** – Commercial and tournament quality pool tables have solid slate beds that are minimum 1" thick attached to a wooden frame of $\frac{3}{4}$ ". Three-piece slate beds are far more common in current times. Three-piece slate beds are equal or better quality to one-piece slate beds and are far more practical. A three-piece slate is easier to transport, install and less likely to warp over time. We recommend avoiding alternate materials such as pearl board, plywood, or cement. The slate allows for the perfect weight, and surface for a ball to roll with proper accuracy and speed. Blatt Billiards uses premium Brazilian Slate approximately 1" to 1.25" Thick with $\frac{3}{4}$ " Wood Framing.
- **Rubber** – The Billiards Congress Of America approves what is referred to as K66 Profile Rubber Cushions. This is the triangular shape measuring roughly $1 \frac{1}{18}$ " across the cushion top, and $1 \frac{3}{16}$ " high at the back. For standard $2 \frac{1}{4}$ " pool balls, the nose height of the rubber should be between $1 \frac{3}{8}$ " to $1 \frac{7}{16}$ " above the table surface. Proper rubber provides greater accuracy, control and rail consistency.
- **Pockets** – Pool table pockets can be leather, plastic, rubber or a mix. Depending on the style of the pool table, and the way it is constructed can determine the materials used. Most classic style pool tables will have external leather net pockets, and modern pool tables with enclosed corners typically have internal leather drop pockets. Blatt Billiards custom tables specifically use what are referred to as #3 or #6 irons with custom hand-sewn and dyed leather pockets. The irons allow for a stronger fit and more seamless design. Specific pocket sizing is more crucial for tournament or higher-level play but fall within the ranges below. Blatt Billiards can accommodate any size pocket requests being wider or narrower for skilled players.

- **Corner Pockets:**
 - Mouth/Front: 4 7/8" minimum to 5 1/8" maximum
 - Throat/Back: 4" minimum to 4 1/4" maximum
- **Side Pockets:**
 - Mouth/Front: 5 3/8" minimum to 5 5/8" maximum
 - Throat/Back: 4 3/8" minimum to 4 7/8" maximum
- **Materials/Finishing** – Blatt Billiards uses a series of proprietary stain formulas for our hand-rubbed finished pool and game tables. The quality of your woods, metals, and finishes are important for aesthetic beauty, but also the longevity and durability of your pool table. There is generally a quality drop off between a table crafted and finished in the United States of America, versus an international import. The combination of cross and flitch matched veneers with our premium finishes ensures your table will last for generations fighting external factors such as wear & tear, and moisture in the air.

Budget

It is important to know, regardless what your budget, style, or lead time might be, Blatt Billiards will have many options for your search!

- **Blatt Billiards Elite Collection** – In the Billiards Industry, the Blatt Billiards' name is synonymous with superb quality and pride of handcrafted tables. Each pool table from this line is individually commissioned to order, and crafted in our New Jersey workshop using a client's selection of hardwood, flitch matched veneers & metals, hand-rubbed finishes, inlays, and hand-sewn & dyed leather pockets. Each table is truly a seamless work of art. These tables will start roughly at \$18,500 & up.
- **Blatt Billiards Semi-Custom Collection** – This is our curated line of North American made tables. This line is built to order using solid hardwoods, typically consisting of Maple Wood, Oak Wood, or Walnut Wood. There are select finishes and materials to choose for your table. These tables will start roughly at \$5,000 & up.

- **Blatt Billiards Value Collection** – This is our curated line of designer focused, and entry level priced pool tables. Brands that may fall into this line are Brunswick Billiards, Presidential Billiards, Imperial USA Billiards, and Plank and Hyde. These tables will start roughly at \$2,000 & up. The goal of this line is to provide professional play, and design at an affordable price point.