Most people are under the mistaken impression that a push shot & a double hit are the same. A double hit is a ball-in-hand foul & occurs when the tip of the cue stick hits the cue ball a 2nd time in the same shot. Some double hits are easily detectable, such as shooting the cue ball into an object ball then having the cue ball rebound from a rail & hit the tip of the cue again. If the cue ball & object ball are “frozen” together & you shoot straight through the two balls with a level stroke we will classify this as a push shot & the shot will be deemed legal. All the ear will hear is a distinct “thud” as the cue tip strikes the cue ball. If the cue ball & the object ball are not touching (a good rule of thumb is, “less than a chalk width apart”) & you shoot straight through them you will most likely be called for a double hit which will result in ball-in-hand to your opponent. A clear & distinct “clack” is heard as the cue tip strikes the cue ball. The cue ball bounces off your tip & strikes the object ball. The cue ball stops dead. Faster than the blink of an eye, the tip of your stick catches up to the cue ball (as you follow through) & strikes the cue ball again, resulting in a double hit. Most of the time this cannot be seen by the naked eye. What you will see is the cue ball & the object ball flying down the table at the same speed (one behind the other) or the cue ball actually catching up to the object ball.

To avoid a double hit the shooter must do one of two things:
1. Shoot down on back of the cue ball causing it to spin back or stop - not follow the object ball down table in unison speed
2. Shoot at an angle -- away from the directional center of the two balls -- so that the cue stick (in it's path through the cue ball) would not have touched the object ball had the cue ball not been there

In the spirit of sportsmanship, it is required that an opponent instruct the shooter in what they must do to avoid the double hit before the shot – especially in the case of a novice player. A team cannot call a double hit infraction if they have not first instructed the shooter on how to avoid the foul. As with any other good hit/bad hit call, a third party should be called to watch the hit &, if knowledgeable, be the person to instruct the opponent in how to avoid the double hit. Note: If the third party is not knowledgeable, they may witness instructions given to the opponent and whether or not the shooter followed the instructions.

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