

# Official Team Manual



**Your guide to League play**  
League Years '20/21, '21/22 & '22/23



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# CALENDAR

<b>January</b>	<b>SPRING SESSION BEGINS</b> 8-Ball Classic and 9-Ball Shootout Season 1 Qualifying Window Opens <i>(Qualifiers Advance to Fall Regionals)</i>
<b>February</b>	8-Ball Classic and 9-Ball Shootout Spring Regionals <i>(Select Sites)</i>
<b>March</b>	8-Ball Classic and 9-Ball Shootout Spring Regionals
<b>April/May</b>	Poolplayer Championships <i>Westgate Las Vegas Resort &amp; Casino</i>
<hr/>	
<b>June</b>	<b>SUMMER SESSION BEGINS</b> U.S. Amateur Championship Entry Window Closes  8-Ball Classic and 9-Ball Shootout Season 1 Qualifying Window Closes <i>(Qualifiers Advance to Fall Regionals)</i>  8-Ball Classic and 9-Ball Shootout Season 2 Qualifying Window Opens <i>(Qualifiers Advance to Spring Regionals)</i>
<b>July</b>	Junior Championships
<b>August</b>	World Pool Championships <i>Westgate Las Vegas Resort &amp; Casino</i>
<hr/>	
<b>September</b>	<b>FALL SESSION BEGINS</b> U.S. Amateur Preliminary Rounds
<b>October</b>	8-Ball Classic and 9-Ball Shootout Fall Regionals
<b>November</b>	U.S. Amateur Championship  U.S. Amateur Championship Entry Window Opens  8-Ball Classic and 9-Ball Shootout Season 2 Qualifying Window Closes <i>(Qualifiers Advance to Spring Regionals)</i>
<b>December</b>	Renew Your Membership!





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# INTRODUCTION

This is the APA Official Team Manual. It contains the rules, procedures and guidelines you will need to know to maximize your enjoyment during League play. The entire team should become thoroughly familiar with the contents of this manual, as knowing the rules will ensure that you, and your teammates, fully enjoy League play.

**NOTE:** By participating in the League, every member agrees to abide by the rules set forth in this manual.

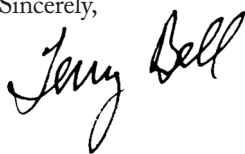
Be sure to have this manual available at every League match. If you lose or misplace it, contact your Local League Management. An online version of this manual is always available at [poolplayers.com](http://poolplayers.com) and on the Member Services App.

APA developed its own handicap system, *The Equalizer*®, which makes it possible for players of all abilities to compete on a nearly even level.

League play allows you to compete year-round. Your team will enjoy professional League Management, receive great membership benefits and have the opportunity to participate in the largest and most rewarding Tournaments offered.

Learn the rules and get lots of practice. Good luck and good shooting to you and your teammates.

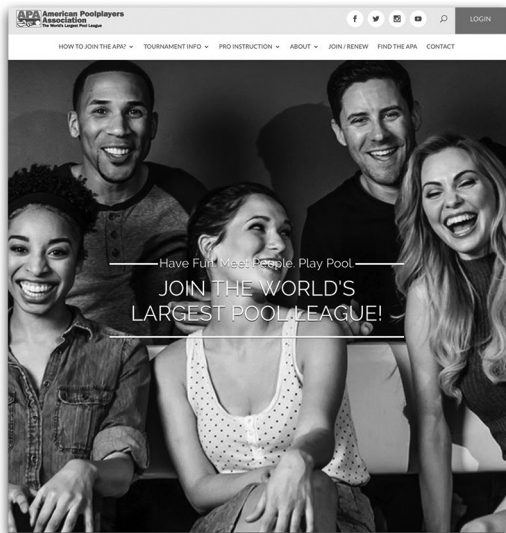
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Terry Bell". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Terry Bell, Founder and Chairman of the Board  
American Poolplayers Association

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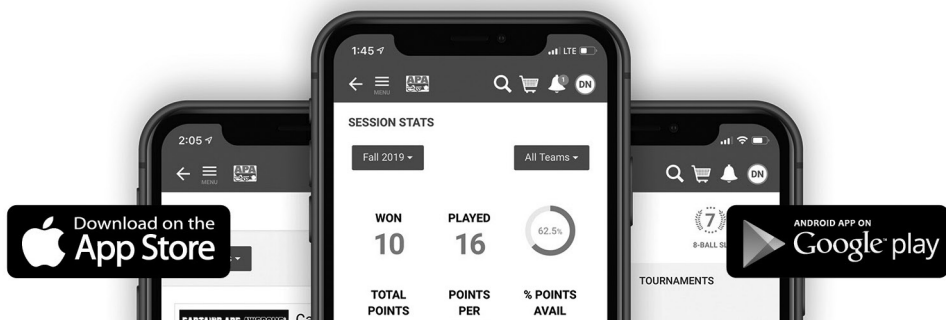
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# FOREWORD

The American Poolplayers Association (APA) was founded by Terry Bell and Larry Hubbard, who at the time were touring professionals and who have since been inducted into the Billiard Congress of America Hall of Fame. Their goal was to organize the sport of pool on the amateur level and to encourage the growth of the game. Since its inception in 1979 APA has become recognized as *The Governing Body of Amateur Pool*.

The American Poolplayers Association spans the globe. It includes the Canadian Poolplayers Association (CPA), the Japanese Poolplayers Association (JPA), and APA of India. Most importantly, thanks to you, the League is over a quarter million members strong and growing.

The rules, procedures and guidelines in this manual apply to League and Tournament play in all four countries.

It is impossible to cover every situation with written rules. Relax, enjoy yourself, and play within the Spirit of the Rules. ***Common sense must prevail.*** Teams that try to gain an advantage by creating their own interpretations are subject to sportsmanship violations. *Win at the table and not from the chair* is a principle that promotes harmony, friendship and good times. That's what this League is all about.

# ETIQUETTE

Many billiards enthusiasts are unfamiliar with the unwritten rules of pool etiquette. Breaking one of these rules can result in arguments and hard feelings between players and teams. Please show good sportsmanship and common courtesy to both your opponents and the Host Location by observing these basic etiquette guidelines:

- Treat your opponent as you would like to be treated.
- Wish your opponent good luck before the match begins.
- Stay away from the table and out of your opponent's line of sight when they are shooting.
- Do not engage your opponent in conversation while they are shooting.
- Call your own fouls – don't wait for a foul to be called on you, or to be asked if you committed a foul. Players with integrity call their own fouls and tell their opponent when they have ball-in-hand, or hand their opponent the cue ball.
- Pay attention to your match.
- Be ready to shoot when it is your turn.
- Do not break down your cue until your match is over.
- If you are expected to play the next match, have your cue and enough quarters for the table (if needed) ready.
- Begin your match as soon as the previous match is over.
- Observe all time guidelines.
- Shake your opponent's hand, win or lose.

Cheering for your teammate is part of the fun, but don't root against your opponent. Observing these guidelines and displaying good sportsmanship helps ensure a fun and competitive evening of League play.



Without our Host Locations, there would be no APA Leagues. Host Locations have the right to refuse service to anyone, at any time.

APA cannot require a Host Location to host a team or to let specific individuals in the door. Remember you are the Host Location's guest.

Please follow these basic guidelines:

- Be courteous and polite to the staff.
- Always respect the equipment – table, balls, cues, etc.
- Be knowledgeable of, and adhere to, House Rules.
- Take care not to dig the tip of your cue when breaking.
- Do not slam balls or bang cues on the floor or table.
- Do not set drinks on the pool tables.
- Never smoke at the table.
- Do not sit on the rails.
- Be aware of your surroundings. If someone is in the way of a shot, wait for them to move or politely ask them to move.
- Unless Host Location policy allows it, never bring in outside food or beverages.

# TIME GUIDELINES

The following time guidelines have been established as a result of years of research and analysis. They take into consideration all skill levels. The time guidelines listed below are easily achievable when teams and players do their best to follow them.

## 8-Ball Team Matches

- A team match should take no more than 4 hours.
- Individual matches should average 8 to 10 minutes per rack.

## 9-Ball Team Matches

- A team match should take no more than 3.5 hours.
- The average individual match should take between 30 to 40 minutes.

## Masters Team Matches

- A team match should take no more than 3 hours.
- The average individual match should take between 45 to 60 minutes.

## Doubles Team Matches

- A team match should take no more than 2 hours.
- Individual matches should average 8 to 10 minutes per rack in 8-Ball or 30 to 40 minutes in 9-Ball.
- A doubles match should average 45 minutes.

### QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE

Average Shot . . . . .	20 Seconds
Special Shooting Situation . . . . .	45 Seconds
Time-outs . . . . .	1 Minute
New Player Selection . . . . .	1 Minute
Team Match Forfeit . . . . .	15 Minutes (past appointed start time)
8-Ball Team Match . . . . .	4 Hours
9-Ball Team Match . . . . .	3.5 Hours
Doubles Matches (8-Ball & 9-Ball) . . . . .	2 Hours
Masters Team Match . . . . .	3 Hours
Ladies Team Match . . . . .	2.5 Hours

**NOTE: Exceeding the time guidelines is not a foul; however, it can result in a sportsmanship violation.**

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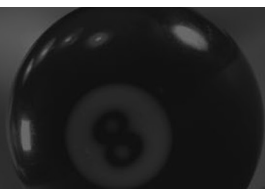
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# LEAGUE STRUCTURE

## SECTION 1

### THE LEAGUE OPERATOR

APA operates through a network of independent franchise owners called League Operators (LOs). League Operators have full authority to make rulings concerning all aspects of the League in their local area. APA stays in close contact with its League Operators, keeps them up-to-date with the latest developments on rules, formats and all other changes, and makes rulings on issues presented to it by League Operators. Your League Operator is a trained professional. Therefore, you can have confidence that the schedules, standings, skill level assignments, special events and all other aspects of the League's operation will be handled timely and accurately. Only an APA-authorized League Operator may administer an APA League. Your League Operator may hire additional assistants and/or representatives to improve service in their League. Your League Operator, along with their assistants and representatives, form the Local League Management. Your League Operator is the highest authority on all decisions made by Local League Management.

---

### LEAGUE ORGANIZATION

**The Formats** - Various formats have been established for League play. If you are interested in a format not currently offered in your area, contact your Local League Management. Every effort will be made to get it started. Check with your Local League Management for the formats offered in your area. The formats offered are:

- **Open Format** - A team match which consists of five individual handicapped matches.
- **Ladies & 3-Person** - A team match which consists of three individual handicapped matches.
- **Doubles** - A team match which consists of two individual matches and one alternating-shot doubles match.
- **Masters** - A team match which consists of three individual matches following U.S. Amateur Championship rules. Each

individual match will be a race-to-7, playing up to eight games of 9-Ball and five games of 8-Ball. Players earn one point for each game won.

- **Juniors** - Check your Local Bylaws.

**The Team** - A team consists of a group of players, the number of which is determined by the format the team is playing. All team members bear the responsibility of ensuring that their teammates are members of legal age, who are playing at skill levels that reflect their true ability. Each team will have a captain. The number of players on a team roster in each format is as follows:

- **Open Divisions (8-Ball & 9-Ball)** - Minimum of five players, maximum of eight.
- **Ladies & 3-Person Divisions** - Minimum of three players, maximum of five.
- **Doubles Divisions** - Minimum of two players, maximum of three.
- **Masters Divisions** - Minimum of three players, maximum of four.
- **Juniors Divisions** - Check your Local Bylaws.

**The Team Captain** - The Team Captain is the person listed first on the team roster and is responsible for managing the team. The Team Captain should have a valid phone number and email address on file, as the Team Captain is the team's point of contact for all communication from the Local League Management. A team may elect a new Team Captain through a simple majority vote at any time. Local League Management must be notified immediately when a new Team Captain is elected. Team Captains are expected to:

- Share League information and announcements with the members of their team.
- Post information at their Host Location.
- Collect membership dues and weekly fees and forward them to Local League Management in a timely manner.
- Have their team at the appropriate location on time.
- Ensure that all rules concerning etiquette, sportsmanship and eligibility are observed.
- Make sure proper scorekeeping procedures are followed.

**The Division** - A division consists of a number of teams (ideally from 6 to 16) competing with each other in a set schedule and geographic area. Local League Management, at its discretion, will do its best to minimize the distance teams within a division must travel.

**NOTE:** In some instances a division may start with only four teams, although a six-team division is the smallest division recommended.

**The Host Location** - Most Host Locations are businesses that have chosen to provide a place for teams to participate in League play. The best way to show appreciation for our hosts is to enjoy their services and be model customers as, without them, there would be no League.

APA Members must respect the Host Location(s) and their property, and follow their policies and guidelines for acceptable behavior, commonly known as House Rules. For example, while League rules may allow massé and jump shots, if House Rules prohibit such shots, the House Rules must prevail.

**HOUSE  
RULES  
MUST  
PREVAIL**

APA cannot and does not dictate their Host Locations' business practices. Host Locations have the right to refuse service to anyone at any time, even in the middle of a session. Neither APA, nor Local League Management, can require Host Locations to host teams or let specific individuals in the door for the purpose of participating in League play.

Each Host Location may accommodate up to two teams per table during a period of play. Local League Management will set the schedule so that there are never more League matches in a location than there are available tables.

**The Division Representative** - The Division Representative (DR) is generally appointed by the League Operator. The DR is a person of integrity who is consistently active in the League, is a member in good standing and enjoys being more involved. The DR is knowledgeable about League affairs and may be consulted on matters related to the League. **Consulted** is the key word, because the DR does not have the authority to make rulings. However, it would be a logical choice to call your DR if you have a question on a rule, as they may be able to help.

Please consult your Local League Management for the duties assigned to your DR, as duties may vary from area to area. Some of the most common duties may include:

- Communicating announcements and distributing other League information and materials to Team Captains and the Host Locations in their division(s).
- Ensuring player feedback gets to the Local League Management.
- Assisting Local League Management with Tournaments and other special events.
- Acting as a member of the Board of Governors.
- Assisting in the recruitment of new players, teams and Host Locations.

**The Board of Governors** - The purpose of the Board of Governors (BOG) and its members is to assist the League Operator. A BOG generally consists of a number of Division Representatives, although not all BOG members are required to be DRs. Your Local League's BOG may:

- Provide feedback to the League Operator on Local Bylaws and procedures.
- Provide input on how protests and disputes between members should be resolved.
- Assist the League Operator to resolve sportsmanship violations.

If deemed necessary, the BOG may recommend sanctions including but not limited to:

- Loss of one or more points.
- Loss of player or team eligibility and/or qualification.
- Fines.
- Suspension or probation, and the appropriate time frame for each.

The League Operator represents a higher authority than the BOG, but APA asks League Operators to uphold the findings of the BOG unless they are in violation of League rules or policies, or blatantly inconsistent with the facts presented to the BOG. The BOG may not conduct meetings without being asked to do so by the League Operator. It is essential to understand that they are not intended or authorized to monitor, criticize or supervise the League Operator. BOG Members who cannot accept their role as described may be removed from the



Board. BOGs are important tools to ensure that disputes get resolved fairly. Please respect your BOG's rulings at all times.

**The Handicap Advisory Committee** - The League Operator may find it useful to establish a Handicap Advisory Committee (HAC) to assist with handicap observations and rulings concerning sandbagging violations. The HAC, if one exists, will normally consist of a number of highly skilled members who are familiar with APA League play. HAC members may be known to the membership or their identities may be kept confidential. The League Operator represents a higher authority than the HAC.

## MEMBERSHIP

You may sign up or renew your membership online at [poolplayers.com](http://poolplayers.com), or give your membership dues to your Local League Management, with a completed and signed membership application. Your Local League Management will forward your membership dues to APA. You will receive membership materials within six weeks.

**IMPORTANT:** It is your responsibility to provide APA and the Local League Management with up-to-date and complete profile information. If renewing your membership, correct any errors and/or update your contact information on the renewal notice or online. Your membership items will be mailed directly to the address you provide. If APA does not have a complete and accurate address, you may not receive your materials. Neither APA nor the Local League Management can be responsible for making those materials available at a later time.

APA is the largest amateur pocket billiards organization in the history of the sport. As a member, you will receive the best benefits available to an amateur poolplayer, such as:

- The opportunity to play in any APA League.
- A membership kit mailed directly to your home.
- A subscription to *The American Poolplayer*® magazine - Published three times a year, containing articles on the sport, tips from the pros, trick shots and more.
- Special member discounts on a variety of goods and services.

**Transferability** - Your membership is accepted wherever an APA sanctioned League exists. There is no transfer fee if you decide to change Leagues, or play in more than one League. If you move from one

League area to another, simply notify Local League Management and let them know that you have participated in another area. The Local League Management in your new area will obtain your records. If there are no APA sanctioned Leagues in your new area, call APA; every effort will be made to get one started. When you transfer to a new area, you must participate at your previously established skill level. Memberships are not refundable and not transferable from one person to another.

## FEES

**Annual Membership Dues** - Your membership must be current for you to be eligible to participate in any APA event. Some events take place over a period of many months and membership must be maintained in order to remain eligible. Annual membership dues are currently \$25 plus applicable taxes and expire December 31. The amount of the annual membership dues may be changed by APA at its discretion.

Members who join after August 15 pay full annual membership dues; however, their annual dues will be prorated to \$15 the following year provided they renew on or before March 1. After March 1, all membership dues will be \$25.

**NOTE:** Members who join in the month of December are not required to renew the following January. Their membership will cover the remainder of the year in which they joined, and the entire next year.

**Juniors** - Annual membership dues are \$10. The prorated renewal amount, if applicable, is \$5.

**Weekly Fee** - Teams pay a weekly fee to participate in League activity. The amount charged in your area is established by your League Operator. The entire weekly fee is due regardless of how many players are on the roster or how many players played during the match.

**Cash, Check or Electronic Payment** - APA urges teams to make all League payments by check, money order or electronic payment methods (where available). Local League Management cannot assume responsibility for cash payments that are not received.

## CALENDAR

There are three sessions during the League year: Summer, Fall and Spring. World Qualifiers are held at the end of the Spring Session. Each League year culminates with the World Pool Championships, typically held in August.

## SCHEDULING

Session schedules will vary depending upon the number of teams playing in a division and the length of the session. Check the division schedule often in the first few weeks of a session, as it is likely to change.

## SCORING

Team matches consist of a series of individual head-to-head matches between members of each team. In each individual match, one team member plays an opponent designated by the other team. The team points earned each week are totaled over the course of a session. The teams with the most points at the end of the session are entitled to compete in Playoffs, discussed later in this manual. The number of points a team can earn in a week of League play are:

- **Open 8-Ball Divisions** - Each individual match is worth up to three points. A team can win a maximum of 15 points.
- **Open 9-Ball Divisions** - Each individual match is worth up to 20 points. A team can win a maximum of 100 points.
- **Ladies Divisions** - Each individual match is worth up to three points. A team can win a maximum of nine points.
- **3-Person Divisions (8-Ball)** - Each individual match is worth up to three points. A team can win a maximum of nine points.
- **3-Person Divisions (9-Ball)** - Each individual match is worth up to 20 points. A team can win a maximum of 60 points.
- **Doubles Divisions (8-Ball)** - Each individual match is worth up to three points and the doubles match is worth up to six points. A team can win a maximum of 12 points.
- **Doubles Divisions (9-Ball)** - Each individual match is worth up to 20 points and the doubles match is worth up to 40 points. A team can win a maximum of 80 points.
- **Masters Divisions** - Each individual match is worth up to seven points. A team can win a maximum of 21 points.
- **Junior Divisions** - Check your Local Bylaws.

## TROPHIES AND AWARDS

Each session, the Division Championship team members may receive a trophy, plaque or other appropriate award. Please refer to your Local Bylaws for the awards presented in your area.

In some areas, a team trophy or plaque may be awarded and kept on display at the Host Location. Your League may also recognize teams, or individual players, with additional annual or seasonal awards, such as Most Valuable Player (MVP), sportsmanship and other accomplishments.

---

## LOCAL BYLAWS

There are some subjects that are covered by Local Bylaws, a document put together by your League Operator with the approval of APA. Local Bylaws may differ from portions of this manual. The rules and guidelines outlined in each League's Local Bylaws apply only in that League area. Topics that may be addressed in your League's Local Bylaws can include, but are not limited to:

- Procedures for dropping off and picking up scoresheets.
- Penalties for late scoresheets and/or fees.
- Procedures for registering teams for the next session.
- Specific penalties for disruptive behavior.
- Information concerning etiquette and sportsmanship.
- Policies regarding the use of electronic devices during local League play.
- Procedures to be followed by the Board of Governors.
- Descriptions of awards that will be given out during the League Year, including the amount of Travel Assistance awarded to teams qualifying for the World Pool Championships.
- Inclement weather policy.
- Office Hours.
- Requirements for requesting and scheduling pre-play or make-up matches.

Make sure you are familiar with the Local Bylaws for your area.

**NOTE:** Local Bylaws may not create ball-in-hand fouls. The Game Rules section of this manual contains the exclusive and complete list of ball-in-hand fouls.

---

## LOCAL BYLAWS MAY NOT CREATE BALL-IN-HAND FOULS

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# GENERAL RULES

## SECTION 2

General Rules govern many of the situations that occur during regular weekly play. This section does not address Game Rules, which are covered elsewhere in this manual. General Rules include forfeits, protest and dispute procedures, grace periods, membership requirements, how matches are started, who pays for the tables, sportsmanship issues and many more topics.

All the rules in this section are the Official APA Rules. They are the result of years of accumulated experience and input from players, Boards and League Operators. Fairness to players of all abilities is the prime consideration for these rules and procedures. With APA approval, some variances may be included in Local Bylaws. These are the General Rules:

---

### 1. NO GAMBLING

---

### 2. AGE REQUIREMENTS

Regular League play is open to members at least 18 years of age. Some League areas may have higher minimum age requirements due to restrictions imposed by state, province, local laws or by Host Locations. Check your Local Bylaws for the age requirements in your area. Teams with underage players may face penalties.

Junior Leagues, where available, are for members under the age of 18. There are no minimum age restrictions placed on Junior Leagues by APA; however, local laws or customs take precedence.

---

### 3. VERIFICATION OF IDENTITY

Your opponent has the right to request proof of identity from you and your teammates. If requested, you must provide a State/Province issued picture ID, Military ID or passport to establish that you are the person listed on your team's roster. If the identification produced is not adequate, play the match, file a protest and give your Local League Management time to settle the matter. Whenever a person plays an individual match purporting to be someone they are not, each member of the team or teams involved in the falsification will be suspended and/or disqualified.



## 4. GENDER ELIGIBILITY

Participation in some divisions, and events, is limited to members of certain genders. If the eligibility of a participant in one of these divisions, or events, is questioned, the gender listed on the State/Province issued picture ID, Military ID or passport will be used to determine eligibility.

## 5. EVERY PLAYER MUST BE A CURRENT MEMBER

A team that allows a player to play without a current membership will receive zero points for the week(s) in which the individual plays. Their opponent will receive the points they won during the team match, plus all points available in any individual match involving an unpaid player. It is the Team Captain's responsibility to make sure all team members have paid their renewal or submitted a completed membership application along with the required fees the first time they play. If a player has not played by the fourth week, their fees must be paid at that time, or they will be dropped from your team's roster.

## 6. NEW PLAYERS

New players must become members before playing their first match, either by submitting their membership fees and a completed and signed membership application with their team's scoresheet, or by becoming a member online at [poolplayers.com](http://poolplayers.com). Teams that allow an unpaid player to participate in a team match will be held accountable for the unpaid membership fee the following week.

Generally, new players will start at a SL3.

**NOTE 1:** Local League Management is authorized to assign a new player a higher starting skill level if they believe the higher skill level more accurately reflects the player's true pool playing ability.

**NOTE 2:** Players with an established skill level in the 8-Ball format will start play in 9-Ball with their 8-Ball skill level; players with an established skill level in the 9-Ball format will start play in 8-Ball with their 9-Ball skill level, unless they are a SL1, SL8 or SL9 in 9-Ball. A SL1 in 9-Ball will begin as a SL2 in 8-Ball; a SL8 or SL9 in 9-Ball will begin as a SL7 in 8-Ball.

The skill level of new players may not immediately reflect their true ability since their ability is not yet known. It is not unusual for a new player's skill level to fluctuate during the first few weeks. A player's skill level is not considered established until they have 10 actual match scores in that format on their record. Penalties may be assessed at the discretion of Local League Management for starting a player of known ability as a new player.

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## 7. PROOF OF MEMBERSHIP

You must demonstrate that you are a current member to receive APA awards and member discounts. You can download a copy of your membership card at [poolplayers.com](http://poolplayers.com) or access your card digitally using the Member Services App on your mobile device.

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## 8. MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

Players may renew their membership for the upcoming calendar year online at [poolplayers.com](http://poolplayers.com) beginning October 1. When renewing, please be sure to update your contact information. Your renewal fee must be paid the first time you play a match in the new calendar year.

**EXCEPTION:** If your Fall Session ends after the first of the year, membership fees are not due until the first time you play a match in the Spring Session. If your Spring Session starts in December, your membership for the upcoming year will be due the first time you play a Spring Session match or by week four of the Spring Session, whichever occurs first.

Renewal notices may be circulated at the end of the Fall Session, during Team Captains' Meetings in the Spring Session and/or during the first week of Spring Session play. Any member who has not renewed by the end of the fourth week of play will be dropped from all team rosters. If a team has a player on its roster that is unavailable to renew prior to the fourth week, the team is advised to renew for them.

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## 9. ROSTERS

Players may be added to your roster at any time during the first four weeks of each session. ***The opposing team should be notified of the roster change before the team match begins.*** To add a player, simply write the word "add" and the player's name next to the roster on your copy of the weekly scoresheet. To drop a player, draw a line through their name on your scoresheet and write "drop" next to it.

If a new team member participated in another APA League area or is a former member, they must play at their established skill level. Before allowing your new teammate to play, your Team Captain must contact Local League Management to obtain the player's established skill level. If they play at a lower skill level, Local League Management has the discretion to forfeit the match. If it is discovered that a transferring or returning player played below their established skill level during a Championship Tournament, the player's team may be subject to disqualification. Players may be dropped at any time during the session, and should be dropped if they become unreliable or cause problems in the League.

Adding players to your roster after week four requires prior approval from the Local League Management. A strict prohibition against allowing teams to add players after the fourth week of a session could force some teams to drop out of the League, leading to forfeits and reducing the opportunity for their opponents to play. However, Local League Management is not required to allow a team to add a player after the fourth week.

All roster changes for qualified teams must be made prior to the team submitting their week four scoresheets. **Altering the roster of a qualified team after week four of the Spring Session will result in the team losing its qualification.**

**NOTE:** No player may play without a handicap after the seventh week of any session, without approval from Local League Management.

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## 10. YOU MAY APPEAR ON ONLY ONE TEAM ROSTER WITHIN A DIVISION

You may only be on one team per division. Once you have played a match, you may not change teams within a division during a session, unless approved by Local League Management, and then only once during the first four weeks.

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## 11. TEAM MATCH PLAY

The format determines the number of individual matches played during a team match. You may only play once in a team match, unless otherwise set out in your Local Bylaws.

## 12. WHO PLAYS FIRST & ORDER OF PLAY

Team Captains flip a coin to decide which team will declare the first player. The winner of the toss has the choice of declaring first or having the opposing Team Captain declare first. Whichever team declares first in the first match, declares second in the second match, first again in the third match, and so on.

Once both teams have declared a player, the players cannot be changed unless a team's choice of player will violate the Team Skill Level Limit rule or the Limited Senior Skill Level rule. While teams are not required to notify their opponent that they are about to break the Team Skill Level Limit rule or the Limited Senior Skill Level rule, it is considered good sportsmanship to notify the opponent, and to give them an opportunity to declare a different player.

## 13. WHO PAYS FOR THE GAMES

Teams will pay equally for table use during a match. Requiring the losing team to pay the table fees is not permitted. Local League Management cannot create exceptions to this rule.

- a. **On coin-operated tables** - Both teams should place a sufficient number of quarters near the coin mechanism. If there are any quarters left when the match is over, they should be equally divided between the two teams.
- b. **On timed tables** - The cost of table time should be paid equally by both teams.

## 14. BYES

Some division schedules may start with a bye or a bye may appear in a division as the result of a team dropping out. Byes do not count as matches played. Concerning scheduling and byes:

- a. If a division schedule includes a bye, Local League Management will make every effort to fill the bye. If the bye is filled, teams may be required to schedule make-up matches at the discretion of Local League Management.
- b. If a team drops out of a division creating a bye, Local League Management may fill the slot and at its discretion, require the new team to arrange make-up matches or require the new team to start in last place.

- c. There will never be two byes in a schedule. If a second bye is created, Local League Management will issue a new schedule to eliminate the byes. The new schedule may result in changes to the home and away pattern as well as different matchups.

Unless otherwise specified in your Local Bylaws, byes will be scored as follows:

- **8-Ball Divisions (Open & Doubles)** - Eight points.
- **9-Ball Divisions (Open & Doubles)** - 60 points.
- **Ladies 8-Ball and 3-Person 8-Ball Divisions** - Five points.
- **Ladies 9-Ball and 3-Person 9-Ball Divisions** - 40 points.
- **Masters Divisions** - 15 points.
- **Junior Divisions** - Check your Local Bylaws.

## 15. FORFEITS

A team match will result in a forfeit if a player is not at the table and ready to begin within 15 minutes of the appointed time. Real Time, as opposed to Bar Time, is the official League Time. Occasionally a new team misreads, or misunderstands the schedule. Some leniency will be granted where new teams or new divisions are involved. Teams joined to play, not to receive forfeits. **Full weekly fees are due by both teams, regardless of how many individual matches are played.** The following rules pertain to forfeits:

- a. A team may begin play with only one player present. Once a team match begins, play must be continuous. Upon completion of each individual match, the team must have another player available to play or the remaining match(es) will be forfeited. If a team does not have a player present for the next individual match, then forfeit points are awarded to the opponent. Forfeits do not count as matches played. Forfeit points are awarded only if the non-forfeiting team has a player present for the match in question, who does not cause the team to break the Team Skill Level Limit rule.
- b. In the event both teams cannot field a player for a match, neither team will be awarded any points. For example, if one team can field four players and the opposing team can only field three players, forfeit points are awarded for the fourth match and

**ONCE A MATCH  
BEGINS, PLAY  
MUST BE  
CONTINUOUS**

neither team is awarded points for the fifth match. To record a forfeit, write down the name of the non-forfeiting team's player, their player number, and the non-forfeiting team number. Then write "forfeit" in the space provided for the name of the forfeiting team's player.

- c. If a team finds it necessary to forfeit individual matches due to a shortage of players, **the forfeit(s) must be the last match(es)**. If a team knows they will be short players, they cannot choose which individual matches to forfeit.
- d. **Deliberate forfeits will not be tolerated.** If Local League Management determines that a team deliberately forfeited a match, or conspired to receive a forfeit, the team or teams involved will be subject to penalties.
- e. Team matches may be rescheduled if both Team Captains agree and receive approval from Local League Management. All make-up matches must be played using current skill levels.

Unless otherwise specified in your Local Bylaws, forfeits will be scored as follows:

- **8-Ball Open** - Two points are awarded for a forfeited individual match during regular session play; three points in Playoffs and Tournaments. Eight points are awarded for a full team forfeit.
- **9-Ball Open** - Up to 15 points are awarded for a forfeited individual match during regular session play; 20 points in Playoffs and Tournaments. Up to 75 points are awarded for a full team forfeit.
- **Ladies 8-Ball and 3-Person 8-Ball** - Two points are awarded for a forfeited individual match during regular session play; three points in Playoffs and Tournaments. Five points are awarded for a full team forfeit.
- **Ladies 9-Ball and 3-Person 9-Ball** - Up to 15 points are awarded for a forfeited individual match during regular session play; 20 points in Playoffs and Tournaments. Up to 40 points are awarded for a full team forfeit.
- **Doubles** - Two points are awarded for a singles 8-Ball match, and 15 points are awarded for a singles 9-Ball match. The doubles match will be awarded double points (4 for 8-Ball or 30 for 9-Ball).

- **Masters** - Five points are awarded for a forfeited individual match during regular session play; seven points in Playoffs and Tournaments. Fifteen points are awarded for a full team forfeit.
- **Juniors** - Check your Local Bylaws.

## 16. CONCERNING TEAMS THAT DROP OUT

A team that drops out during a session will be required to pay all past dues, the balance of all dues they would have owed had they completed the session, and two weeks' fee deposit (which will be applied to the final weeks of the session) before they would be allowed to rejoin the League.

A player who was on such a team, and who wishes to rejoin the League, must first pay their share (calculated by taking the total amount owed by the team that dropped and dividing it by the number of players on that team's roster at the time the team dropped) before being reinstated. However, the Team Captain may not be eligible for reinstatement until the full amount owed by the team is collected.

## 17. SPLITTING MATCHES

A team match is normally played on one table. Occasionally, lengthy matches make it logical to split a team match onto a second table, if a second table of the same size is available. If the fourth match has not started by two hours after the official League start time, teams should put up their next player and start play on a second table. The fifth match would then be played on the first table that becomes available. If the fifth player is not present, a forfeit cannot be called until the fourth match has concluded.

A team is subject to penalties if it deliberately prevents a second table from being available, or resists using the second table to split the match. The option to split matches can only be waived if both teams agree to complete the match on one table.

## 18. COACHING

Coaching is defined as giving advice to a teammate during their turn at the table. What constitutes as coaching is sometimes open to interpretation. Therefore, when your opponent finishes their turn, you are advised not to continue talking to your teammates. Go to the table and begin your turn.

**NOTE 1:** A time-out must be called before coaching begins.



**NOTE 2:** Ineligible players cannot coach or participate in a group consensus.

**NOTE 3:** A team can only be charged with a time out after the rack has been struck in any individual game.

Comments that relate to the game situation **are considered** coaching. Some examples of comments that will be deemed coaching are:

- Which ball to shoot, except in 9-Ball.
- Where to leave the cue ball.
- Whether to shoot soft or hard.
- Whether to use english.
- Whether to play safe or defensive.

Some examples of comments that **are NOT considered** coaching are:

- Telling a player if they have solids or stripes (8-Ball).
- Telling a player to mark the pocket when shooting the 8-ball.
- Reminding a player which is the next ball in the rotation (9-Ball).
- Giving advice or placing the cue ball before the break.
- Reminding a player to chalk up.
- Telling a player a foul has occurred.
- Answering a player's question concerning rules.
- Comments such as "good hit" or "nice shot".
- Conversations with or comments to a player when it is not their turn at the table.

Be courteous to your opponent and observe the following coaching guidelines:

- a. Any eligible member of the team can be the coach. A coach does not have to be designated until a time-out is called, and a different coach can be designated for each time-out.
- b. Mark the time-outs with a "T" on the scoresheet to avoid confusion. Taking too many time-outs is not a foul, although consistent attempts to do so may result in a sportsmanship violation. It is up to a player to notify their opponent if they are out of time-outs.
- c. Any member of the shooting team may call for a time-out. In order to avoid confusion, say it loudly and clearly enough for all to hear.

- d. If any member of the team suggests a time-out to the shooter, the time-out will be charged.
- e. If the shooter requests a time-out, the coach may refuse it and no time-out will be charged.
- f. During their turn at the table, the shooter may discuss strategy only with the coach designated for that time-out. A coach may get a group consensus from other players on their team and pass it on to the shooter, but only the designated coach may pass it on.
- g. Coaching should be limited to one minute or less. Violations of this guideline may lead to penalties.
- h. Coaches may place the cue ball for a player in a ball-in-hand situation during a time-out.
- i. Coaches may not mark the playing surface of the table or guide the shooter's cue during the execution of the shot; however, it is permissible for a coach to place an item on the rail to indicate where to aim. The coach should leave the playing area before the shooter attempts their shot.
- j. To avoid disputes, when your opponent's turn is over, go to the table and begin your turn. Do not sit and talk with your teammates, as your opponent may think you are being coached.

The number of time-outs permitted in each format are as follows:

- **Open Divisions (8-Ball & 9-Ball)** - Skill level 1, 2, 3 and **unrated** players (new to APA) receive two time-outs per game. Skill level 4 and higher receive one time-out per game.
- **Ladies and 3-Person Divisions** - Open Division rules apply.
- **Doubles Division** - Open Division rules apply for singles matches. One time-out per game, regardless of skill level, may be used during the doubles match.
- **Masters Division** - There are no time-outs.
- **Juniors** - Check your Local Bylaws.

## 19. HOME LOCATIONS

Host Locations are not limited to bars, taverns and pool halls. Any establishment with a pool table is welcome to host a team, including recreation centers, bowling alleys, etc. Teams may not change their home location during a session unless the location closes, the location requests it or Local League Management approves the move.

## 20. MAKE SURE YOU KEEP SCORE PROPERLY

Accurate and conscientious scorekeeping is essential, especially when it comes to marking innings and Defensive Shots. Your scoresheet does not have to match your opponent's. You keep your score and let your opponent keep theirs. Penalties will be assessed to teams or players that:

- Try to negotiate innings with their opponent.
- Coach their players to miss shots in an attempt to run up innings. Deliberate misses must be marked in the Defensive Shots block of the scoresheet.
- Encourage any team or player to improperly keep score.

Proper scorekeeping is the greatest contribution you can make to the smooth operation of *The Equalizer*® handicap system and the prevention of sandbagging. *The Equalizer*® works best when teams keep score properly.

Marking inaccurate information on a scoresheet, intentionally omitting information from a scoresheet, or agreeing or conspiring with others to falsely represent what occurred during a match on a scoresheet, may result in your suspension, or in the termination of your APA membership. Please report any team that you believe is not following proper scorekeeping procedures to Local League Management or to APA. More information and instructional videos on how to keep score are available at [poolplayers.com](http://poolplayers.com).

## 21. DEFENSIVE SHOTS

A Defensive Shot is any shot taken without the intent to legally pocket a ball. This definition includes, but is not limited to, shots taken in an attempt to hook the shooter's opponent. The shooter's **INTENT** is the determining factor. Unless the shooter declares that their shot was a Defensive Shot, it is up to the scorekeeper to decide if the shooter intended to try and pocket a ball. Consistently and correctly marking Defensive Shots ensures the effectiveness of *The Equalizer*®.

**THE SHOOTER'S  
INTENT IS THE  
DETERMINING  
FACTOR**

Defensive Shots fall into two basic categories: ethical and unethical. The scorekeeper should mark both types as Defensive Shots on the scoresheet.

**Ethical** - There are several types of ethical Defensive Shots:

- **Safety** - A safety is a defensive action taken when the shooter has no makeable or high percentage shot, or chooses to leave their opponent in a difficult situation.
- **Legal Contact Only** - Making legal contact with no intent to pocket a ball in an attempt to deny your opponent ball-in-hand.
- **Picking Up the Cue Ball** - Conceding your shot at the table by giving ball-in-hand to your opponent.
- **Intentionally Shooting the Wrong Ball** - Shooting at an opponent's ball (8-Ball), or out of rotation (9-Ball), for the purpose of creating a more favorable table layout for the shooter.

**Unethical** - Intentionally missed shots for the purpose of handicap manipulation. Taking unethical Defensive Shots is a form of sandbagging.

**NOTE 1:** An attempted Defensive Shot that results in the legal pocketing of one of the shooter's category of balls (8-Ball) or the legal pocketing of any object ball (9-Ball) does not end the shooter's turn. The shooter must continue to shoot, and the shot should be marked as a Defensive Shot.

**NOTE 2:** An attempt to pocket a ball and leave one's opponent with a difficult shot if the attempt fails, is not considered a Defensive Shot. These shots are often called "two-way shots" because they have both offensive and defensive qualities. Two-way shots can be unethical if they are used to mask a player's intent by making it appear as if there is an attempt to pocket a ball, when the true objective is to play a safety that is difficult for a scorekeeper to recognize. Scorekeepers who observe shooters playing multiple two-way shots in a match should make a note on the scoresheet.

## 22. HANDICAP SYSTEM

*The Equalizer*® handicap system is designed to give each member a fair chance to win matches. Part of that system is subjective. When a player is deemed to be playing at a skill level that is below their true ability, their League Operator is authorized to make the player's team ineligible for Session Playoffs and subsequent Tournaments. When such a determination is made during the Session Playoffs, the League Operator may disqualify the team from the Playoffs and subsequent Tournaments. League Operators strive to make any disqualifications or ineligibility decisions within 15 days after the Session Playoff finals.

Each player is responsible for ensuring that their teammates' skill levels reflect their true ability. If you think a teammate's skill level is too low for any reason, simply call your Local League Management and ask them to consider raising the player's skill level. There are many anti-sandbagging measures built in to *The Equalizer*®, but attempts to sandbag still impede APA's purpose of providing every player a fair chance to win every time they step to the table. Teams or members who attempt to sandbag will be subject to penalties ranging from warnings to membership termination.

Please report sandbagging to your League Operator, Division Representative or Board of Governors. For documentation purposes, all sandbagging concerns must be made in writing and will be kept confidential. This information will assist Local League Management to determine whether a player is trying to hold down their skill level. Teams or individuals guilty of conspiring to manipulate skill levels through dishonest practices, as determined by Local League Management, will be penalized.

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## 23. LOCAL LOWEST ATTAINABLE

Once you have 10 League matches on record (an established skill level) or you have been assigned a skill level, you will not be allowed to drop more than one skill level. Exceptions may be made in rare instances of physical disability or other extreme circumstances which might permanently change the player's ability to shoot.

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## 24. CHAMPIONSHIP LOWEST ATTAINABLE

Players who have participated in the Poolplayer Championships or World Pool Championships will receive a Championship Lowest Attainable (CLA). APA maintains a permanent record of players who have participated in Championship events. Players may not compete at a handicap below their CLA. Some exceptions may be made, but only if Local League Management specifically appeals an individual's CLA to APA's Handicap Review Committee (HRC). Those appeals, if justified, will be granted.

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## 25. TEAM SKILL LEVEL LIMIT

All formats, with the exception of Masters, have a Team Skill Level Limit. Each format's Team Skill Level Limit is indicated in the bullet points below. **A team playing less than a full match must show that**

it would not have exceeded the Team Skill Level Limit, if all the matches had been played. If the Team Skill Level Limit is broken, the offending team receives zero points for the entire team match. The non-offending team would receive:

- **8-Ball Open (23-Rule)** - All points they won plus two points for the match in which the 23-Rule was broken and any subsequent individual matches.
- **9-Ball Open (23-Rule)** - All points they won plus 15 points for the match in which the 23-Rule was broken and any subsequent individual matches.
- **Ladies 8-Ball and 9-Ball (13-Rule)** - All points they won plus two points (15 points in 9-Ball) for the match in which the 13-Rule was broken and any subsequent individual matches.
- **3-Person 8-Ball and 9-Ball (14-Rule)** - All points they won plus two points (15 points in 9-Ball) for the match in which the 14-Rule was broken and any subsequent individual matches.
- **Doubles Formats (10-Rule)** - Check your Local Bylaws.
- **Juniors** - Check your Local Bylaws.

**NOTE 1:** Once both teams have declared a player, the players cannot be changed unless the Team Skill Level Limit rule is in jeopardy.

**NOTE 2:** It is permissible for a team to count the skill level of an eligible player who is on the roster but not present at the match site towards the Team Skill Level Limit.

**NOTE 3:** During Playoffs, Tri-Annals, World Qualifiers and the World Pool Championships, an ineligible player's skill level may not be used towards the Team Skill Level Limit.

When forming a new team, be cautious about the number of highly skilled players you recruit. Teams that cannot comply with the Team Skill Level Limit rule must play:

- **Open Divisions (8-Ball & 9-Ball)** - Four players whose combined skill levels do not exceed 19, and forfeit the fifth match. If the team's skill levels increase to the point where the skill levels of the lowest four players on the roster exceed 19, then they can play three players to 15 and forfeit the fourth and fifth matches.
- **Ladies Divisions** - Two players whose combined skill levels do not exceed 10, and forfeit the third match.

- **3-Person Divisions** - Two players whose combined skill levels do not exceed 11, and forfeit the third match.
- **Doubles Divisions** - Check your Local Bylaws.
- **Junior Divisions** - Check your Local Bylaws.

A violation of the Team Skill Level Limit rule has officially occurred when the rack is struck in the individual match that causes the violation. If your opponent violates the Team Skill Level Limit, notify the opposing Team Captain.

## 26. LIMITED NUMBER OF SENIOR SKILL LEVEL PLAYERS (8-BALL AND 9-BALL)

Senior Skill Level players are those who have a skill level of 6 or higher. Teams may not field more than two Senior Skill Level players in a match. A violation of the rule has officially occurred when the rack is struck in an individual match involving a third Senior Skill Level player. The ineligible player forfeits the individual match and the teams go on to the next match. The skill levels of both players will count towards the Team Skill Level Limit for that match. If a third Senior Skill Level is used, the points earned by the third Senior Skill Level player will not count.

**NOTE:** Once both teams have declared a player, the players cannot be changed unless the Limited Senior Skill Level rule is in jeopardy.

## 27. SESSION PLAYOFFS

All the rules governing regular session play apply during Session Playoffs. Playoffs and Championship matches, with the exception of forfeits, are scored the same as regular League play.

The first team to reach a match point total that the opposing team cannot overcome is the winner. Therefore, Playoff matches often end before all individual matches are complete. Once a player has reached the number of racks or balls necessary to secure the win for their team, simply stop the match and write "**Incomplete Match**" or "DNF" (Did Not Finish) on the scoresheet. The two teams cannot agree to continue the match, because the scoresheet must show where the match actually ended.

**Unless a different Playoff structure is specified in your Local Bylaws, the following process will be observed:**

At the end of each session there is a Playoff in each division among the top finishing teams and a wild card team. The team that wins the

Playoffs wins the award(s), the division title for that session and also becomes qualified for the Local Level of the World Pool Championships referred to as the World Qualifier. A team does not win the division title, or qualification, by earning the most points during the session. Point standings determine team seedings in the Playoffs. Full weekly fees are collected during the Playoffs.

During the semifinals, the first place team plays the wild card team and the second place team plays the third place team. In the finals, the two semifinal winners play each other for the division title.

### **Session Playoff Site Selection**

The Session Playoff site will be chosen at or prior to the Team Captains' Meeting at the beginning of the session and will be indicated on the schedule. Playoff matches may be held at a neutral location or at the home location of one or both of the teams involved.

### **How The Wild Card Team Is Selected**

After the final week of play, the League Operator, or their designated representative, in the presence of witnesses, will conduct the wild card draw. Teams that do not make the Playoffs are eligible for the draw, unless they forfeited more than five individual matches during the course of the session, are not current with all League fees or are deemed ineligible by the League Operator.

### **Tie-Breaking Procedures**

It will happen quite often that teams will finish a session tied for a position. The following tie-breaking procedures will be used to decide which team places ahead of the other. In some cases, these procedures may only dictate the difference between first and second place; however, in other cases, they will decide which team(s) advance to the Playoffs.

**If two teams are tied** - Break the tie by letting their records against each other during regular session play decide the outcome. If they played each other more than once and the overall point total is still a tie, only the last time they played each other will be considered. If the result is still a tie, the winner will be determined by the team that won the most individual matches the last time they played.

**If three or more teams are tied** - Break the tie by matching the teams against each other according to which teams involved met first during



the session. After the matching-up, proceed as described above to determine a winner, and then match the winner against the other team in the tie as described above.

**If teams are tied and they did not play each other during the regular session** - Unless otherwise set out in Local Bylaws, the winner will be determined by who earned the most points in the last week of the regular session. If both teams earned the same number of points during the last week of the regular session, their point totals from the week prior would then be compared in order to determine a winner. Continue with this approach until the tie is broken.

### **Ties In Playoff Matches**

In case of a tie at the end of a Playoff match, the number of individual matches won by each team will determine the winner using the following methods:

- **Open Divisions (8-Ball & 9-Ball)** - If after four matches, the team match is tied and neither team can field a fifth player, the team that won two individual matches first will be declared the winner.
- **Masters, Ladies & 3-Person Divisions** - If after two matches the team match is tied and neither team can field a third player, the team that won the first individual match will be declared the winner.
- **Doubles Divisions (8-Ball & 9-Ball)** - If a Playoff match ends in a tie, the team that won the doubles match will be declared the winner.
- **Junior Divisions** - Check your Local Bylaws.

### **Participation In Session Playoffs**

For a player to participate in Session Playoffs, they must have played at least four times with that team during the session. Local Bylaws may impose additional Playoff eligibility requirements. A team with an ineligible player on its roster may NOT use that player's skill level towards the Team Skill Level Limit. If an ineligible player is used, then a violation of this rule officially occurs when the rack is struck in the ineligible player's match. The ineligible player forfeits the match and the teams go on to the next individual match. The skill levels of both players count toward the Team Skill Level Limit rule for that match. Once the team match is over and one of the teams has left the match site, or the scoresheets are signed by both Team Captains, the match will stand

as played, even if an ineligible player(s) has competed. The number of matches played by each player is prominently displayed on each week's scoresheets.

Byes and forfeits do not count as matches played.

## 28. NO PROFESSIONAL PLAYERS ALLOWED

APA is an amateur League. APA reserves the right to reject or cancel the memberships of those individuals whom are deemed to be professionals. APA has a variety of criteria for determining whether a player is a professional. The criteria include: possessing a tour membership in any men's or women's professional billiards organization, winning tour points from any of those organizations, being a nationally known money player in APA's judgment, or otherwise being recognized as a billiards professional, billiards celebrity or entertainer including being a noted exhibition performer, retired professional, etc. APA reserves the right to rule on the amateur/professional status of any member, and may consider all, some, or none of the above criteria in making its ruling. Players who enter a professional event, perform exhibitions or otherwise behave as a professional, place their amateur status at risk, and may be declared ineligible to be a member of APA.

Local League Management has the option of prohibiting any individual from participating in the Local League who has consistently demonstrated professional characteristics, is a known money player or is perceived as earning a substantial portion of their living playing pool. An individual who gives exhibitions or lessons for money may be deemed a professional. Similarly, a highly skilled individual who is employed as a manager/assistant manager of a billiard room may be categorized as a house pro and thus be ineligible for amateur play. However, a person cannot be deemed a professional simply because they are a highly skilled pool player. There are many highly skilled amateurs who do not otherwise exhibit professional characteristics, who are welcome to play in APA.

## 29. EQUIPMENT

Laser devices, mechanical cues and training/practice aids may not be used in League play. Special equipment, such as bridges and cue extenders, are legal. Some specialty cues may be allowed on a limited

basis. Players are expected to use equipment consistent with its intended purpose. Additional equipment guidelines applicable during APA League play are set forth below:

- **Jump Cues** - Only allowed in Masters Divisions.
- **Break Cues** - Sometimes combined with jump cues to form a jump-break cue, these cues are allowed in League play for breaking. They may only be used to perform jump shots or massé shots in Masters Divisions.
- **Regular Shooting Cues** - These cues may be used to perform jump shots, massé shots and break shots in all APA League and Tournament play. You may not “break down” your Regular Shooting Cue to perform a jump shot.

**NOTE 1:** Using a regular shooting cue to break does not qualify it as a “break cue”.

**NOTE 2:** Wheelchair players, juniors and players who are limited in their height are allowed to use a junior cue or “shortie” as a regular shooting cue.

You may change cues and/or cue shafts during a game provided the cues and/or shafts you are switching to do not violate any rules of use, and you remain within the time guidelines.

If you have questions about whether the use of a piece of equipment, not otherwise covered by these rules, will be permitted during League, you must seek a ruling from APA before using the equipment.

### 30. PLAYERS RECEIVING INCENTIVES

Players are not permitted to solicit or accept incentives to play for a location or for a team, as such activity puts the player's amateur status at risk and is contrary to the purpose of APA. Players soliciting or accepting incentives may be disqualified. Inappropriate incentives include, but are not limited to, free table usage or payment for all or a part of the player's membership or weekly fees.

It is acceptable for a Host Location to offer a particular benefit, or benefits, to all members participating in League play at their establishment. However, it is not acceptable for Host Locations to offer special deals to a particular player, or limited group of players.

## 31. RULES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE

APA reserves the right to make all necessary rulings and rule modifications at any time. Any rule changes will be sent to your League Operator and will be made available to all members through posted bulletins, Team Captains' Meetings, publication at poolplayers.com, and/or publication in *The American Poolplayer*® magazine. APA also reserves the right to make exceptions to rules in order to promote fairness.

## 32. PROTESTS AND DISPUTES

In general, all protests, disputes and complaints directed to Local League Management must be made by the Team Captain. Teams that disrupt League operations by making frivolous protests to Local League Management may be penalized. Most protests and disputes should be settled immediately by looking up the applicable rule(s) in this manual, and/or through the use of common sense and good sportsmanship. Your Local League Management will be available to answer questions during its hours of operation but may be unavailable to make rulings during League play.

You are encouraged to resolve as many disputes as possible on the spot. The procedure for settling disputes is as follows:

- If a dispute between two teams cannot be resolved by existing rules, the two players and Team Captains should resolve the issue through negotiation and compromise. Oftentimes a dispute can be easily settled by replaying the game. Once both teams have agreed to replay a game, no protest may be filed at a later time concerning the dispute that led to the replay. ***You cannot agree to a resolution with the idea that if you win, it is okay, but if you lose, you are going to protest.***
- In the event the Team Captains cannot settle the dispute, they will both submit a written protest to the League Operator. The protest must describe the circumstances involved and include the \$25 protest fee from each team. The League Operator may rule on the protest/dispute or submit it to the Board of Governors. The decision of the League Operator or the BOG is final, and the loser of the protest will forfeit their \$25. The winner will be reimbursed. You will lose your right to protest if you refuse to continue the match or refuse to attempt to resolve the issue through negotiation and/or compromise.

Once Local League Management has received your scoresheet, it is too late to protest. Know the rules and review the scoresheet before submitting it to your Local League Management. It is essential that all parties involved display good sportsmanship during the dispute itself. Poor sportsmanship and/or abusive behavior on behalf of any party following a decision is likely to result in serious disciplinary action. Teams consistently involved in disputes may incur penalties ranging from point deductions to suspension or termination.

### **33. APPEALS**

Your League Operator automatically reviews all disciplinary actions recommended by the Board of Governors in your area, if any, and will notify you or your Team Captain of the decision. Once a disciplinary action has been taken by your League Operator and/or by the BOG, you have the right to appeal the decision(s) of the League Operator and/or BOG to the APA Appeals Committee. You may not appeal the decision to the APA Appeals Committee until the BOG has ruled on the issue, if a BOG is going to rule on the issue. If you wish to appeal disciplinary action to APA, you must submit a written appeal addressed to the APA Appeals Committee, at the address on the back of this manual. The appeal must state the disciplinary action taken and why you, or your team, believe APA should review the decision of Local League Management. APA has sole authority and absolute discretion to act on the matter and its decision shall be final.

### **34. RIGHT TO REFUSE SERVICE**

League Operators, in their sole discretion, have the right to refuse to do business with any individual, at any time, regardless of whether the individual's membership is in good standing.

### **35. APA IS THE HIGHEST AUTHORITY**

The American Poolplayers Association is the highest authority concerning all League rulings.

APA does not, nor does it authorize its League Operators, or their employees, to discriminate against any individual based on race, creed, religion, gender, sexual preference, or any other criteria related to discrimination that has been established by the Federal Government. All individuals who meet the minimum age requirements are eligible

for APA membership, benefits and participation in APA programs unless they have violated rules that are specifically detailed in this Team Manual.

APA and its League Operators will do their best to promote harmony, security and satisfaction among the APA members playing in their Leagues, and will attempt to satisfy requests relating to team composition and the types of establishments that serve as Host Locations. However, APA cannot dictate, nor is responsible for, the composition of each team. Teams are typically made up of friends, relatives and/or co-workers and neither APA, its League Operators, or their employees, have the authority to guarantee any individual placement on any particular team.

APA team play typically takes place in public locations, such as billiard rooms, taverns and clubs. APA cannot force a team to participate in a location where the members of that team feel uncomfortable.

# GAME RULES

## SECTION 3

### GENERAL DESCRIPTION

It is impossible to cover every situation with rules. *Common sense must prevail.* Play within the Spirit of the Rules, as well as the written rule. Teams that try to gain an advantage by creating their own interpretation of rules are subject to sportsmanship violations. *Win at the table and not from the chair.*

**8-Ball** is played with a cue ball and a rack of 15 object balls. The primary purpose of this game is for one player to pocket the solid balls numbered from 1 to 7 or the striped balls numbered from 9 to 15, and then pocket the 8-ball before their opponent. Each player's category of balls is determined when the first player legally pockets a ball. For example, if the first ball pocketed in the game is the 3-ball, then that player must pocket the rest of the balls numbered 1 to 7 while the opposing player attempts to pocket all the balls numbered 9 to 15. The turn passes from one player to the next whenever the shooter fails to pocket a ball of their category or fouls. A player legally pocketing a ball of their category must continue to shoot.

The player who pockets their entire category of balls first, and then legally pockets the 8-ball, is the winner of the game. In League play, the 8-ball must be pocketed in a marked pocket.

**NOTE:** In Masters Divisions, players have the option of calling, rather than marking, the 8-ball pocket.

**9-Ball** is played with a cue ball and nine object balls numbered 1 through 9. It is a rotation game, meaning the balls are shot in numerical order. The shooter must strike the cue ball into the lowest numbered ball on the table first. The game is over when the 9-ball is legally pocketed. A player retains their turn at the table as long as they strike the lowest numbered ball first, and legally pocket a ball. The shooter need not pocket the lowest numbered ball to continue shooting. For example, the shooter may strike the 1-ball into the 4-ball (a combination shot) thus pocketing the 4-ball and continue their turn at the table. On their next shot, the 1-ball must again be struck first. If the shooter shoots the

lowest numbered ball into the 9-ball and pockets the 9-ball, the game is over. In League play, balls 1 through 8 are worth one point each when pocketed and the 9-ball is worth two points.

**NOTE:** In Masters Divisions, 9-Ball is not played by ball count/points. Each individual game is won when the shooter legally pockets the 9-ball.

## 1. LAGGING

Players lag at approximately the same time to see who wins the first break. The ball that stops closest to the head rail wins. It is permissible to strike the head rail. If the lagged balls make contact with each other, both players fail to strike the foot rail during the lag, or a ball stops in the jaw of a pocket, re-lag. Failure to strike the foot rail, or striking a side rail, or any pocket, results in loss of lag. Players are discouraged from using the cue ball during the lag. Insisting upon lagging with the cue ball is considered a sportsmanship violation and should be reported to Local League Management. The winner of the lag breaks in the first game; from that point on, the winner of each rack breaks in the next game. Please note the following:

- In Masters Divisions, the winner of the lag will have choice of format or the break. Once the format has been chosen, the entire set of that format must be completed before moving to the other format.
- In Doubles Divisions, the lag does not count as part of the player rotation.

## 2. RACKING

All balls should be frozen (touching) as tightly as possible. Balls are racked by the non-breaking player, with the head (front) ball on the foot spot. The breaking player may request and receive a rerack. The loser of the lag, and/or the loser of any subsequent game, racks for the opponent. In each format, the ball placement in the rack is as follows:

- **8-Ball** - All 15 balls are racked in a triangle, with the 8-ball in the center. The remaining balls can be placed in any order.
- **9-Ball** - The balls numbered 1 through 9 are racked in a diamond shape. The 1-ball is placed at the front of the diamond, the 9-ball in the center. The remaining object balls can be placed in any order. When using coin-operated tables, teams have the option to



substitute any unused balls (10-ball to 15-ball) for pocketed balls following a short game; this will save both teams money during League night. The breaker can ask for the lowest available nine balls to be used in each game.

**Example:** If the 3-ball and 9-ball are made on the break (because a 9-on-the-Snap is a win, unless you scratch), you can use the 10-ball and 11-ball in the next rack. The object ball sequence in the next game would be 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10 and 11. The 11-ball, in effect, is the “9-ball” (last ball) in this game. Do not use the 10-ball to replace the 3-ball, as this can be confusing. Shoot the balls in numerical order.

### 3. BREAKING

The rack must be struck before a foul can occur.

A player must break from behind the head string for the break to be considered legal; in addition, at least four object balls must be driven to the rails or a ball must be pocketed. The cue ball may not be shot into a rail before hitting the rack.

**THE RACK  
MUST BE  
STRUCK  
BEFORE A  
FOUL CAN  
OCCUR.**

**NOTE:** A player who is physically unable to break due to a medical condition may pass the break to the opponent, but only with prior approval from Local League Management. Such occurrences should be marked as a Defensive Shot and an inning where appropriate. Players are not allowed to have a teammate break for them.

The cue ball's point of contact with the table is used to determine if it is behind the head string, also referred to as being **in**. To make this determination simply compare the head string, an imaginary line connecting the two diamonds that are second from the head rail (see Table Diagram, pg. 86), to the cue ball's point of contact. A ball that is dead-center on the head string is considered **out**, or not behind the head string.

The cue ball must make contact with the rack as follows to be considered legal:

- **8-Ball** - The head ball or the second row of balls must be struck first. Failure to strike the head ball or second row of balls does not result in a foul.
- **9-Ball** - The 1-ball must be struck first. Failure to strike the 1-ball first does not result in a foul.

If the rack is struck, but the break does not qualify as legal, the balls are reracked by the non-breaking player and rebroken by the same breaking player.

If the rack is struck, but the break does not qualify as legal **and results in a scratch**, the balls are reracked and broken by the opposite player.

Breaking safe or soft is not allowed. Make a note on the scoresheet if you observe a player breaking safe or soft. Local League Management may issue penalties to teams and players who are not breaking hard. Breaking just hard enough to comply with this rule is not a guarantee against penalties. Break as hard as you can while maintaining control.

## 4. AFTER THE BREAK

Various circumstances can occur upon completion of the break. They are:

- A foul on a legal break will result in ball-in-hand for the opponent.
- No balls are pocketed; it is the opponent's turn.
- An object ball is pocketed; it is still the breaker's turn.

### 8-Ball

- a. If a scratch occurs on the break, the opponent receives ball-in-hand, which must be executed from behind the head string, shooting at a ball that is outside the head string. If an object ball is dead-center on the head string, or **out**, then it is playable. If it is **in**, the ball is not playable. If the two players cannot agree on whether an object ball is **in** or **out**, then a third party should be consulted. If a third party is consulted, the third party's call is final. If no agreed upon third party is available, then a coin flip will decide the issue. To intentionally shoot at a ball that is **in** is a sportsmanship violation to be reported to Local League Management.

**NOTE:** The cue ball must be **in** as noted above before play can begin. This is not a foul; no penalty may be assessed. It is up to the opponent to check to be sure the cue ball is **in** before it is shot. If the cue ball is **out**, the shooter must readjust the cue ball to a position behind the head string.

- b. If the 8-ball is pocketed on the break, it is a win unless the player fouls the cue ball, in which case it is a loss.

- c. If one or more object balls from one category are pocketed on the break, that becomes the shooter's category of balls.
- d. If balls from each category are pocketed on the break (for example, two solids and one stripe), it is still an open table.

The breaker has the option to shoot any ball except the 8-ball (which would be a foul); any ball pocketed without fouling counts. If the shooter makes one ball of each category on their second shot, the table remains open; a miss or foul on the second shot results in an open table for the opponent. If the opponent then pockets a ball and fouls, it is still an open table.

**NOTE:** During an open table, a player can shoot a combination involving stripes and solids; the legally pocketed ball will determine their category of balls for the remainder of the game. The 8-ball may not be used as the first ball in a combination shot, as it is never neutral.

## 9-Ball

- a. A foul on a legal break will result in ball-in-hand for the opponent anywhere on the table. Pocketed balls, if any, stay down (are not spotted), except the 9-ball. Pocketed balls are marked as dead balls on the scoresheet.
- b. If the 9-ball is pocketed on the break, this is a win unless the player scratches, in which case the 9-ball (any other available high numbered ball is adequate) is spotted and the turn passes to the opponent. If the foot spot is occupied by another ball, the 9-ball is placed directly behind that ball and as close to the foot spot as possible.
- c. If one or more balls are pocketed on the break, it is still the breaker's turn.

**NOTE:** Push-outs are fairly standard in pro events and in the U.S. Amateur Championship; however, they are not allowed in APA handicapped competition. Masters Divisions are non-handicapped and follow U.S. Amateur Championship rules; therefore, the push-out is allowed, and any balls pocketed on a push-out will be spotted.

## 5. SHOOTING THE WRONG BALLS

Occasionally, a player will foul by mistakenly shooting the wrong category of balls (in 8-Ball) or the wrong numbered ball (in 9-Ball). The shooter may avoid a foul by asking the opponent which ball or category

of balls they should be shooting. If asked, the opponent must answer honestly. If the shooter hits the wrong ball, a foul occurs as soon as the wrong ball is struck, regardless of whether the ball is pocketed or not.

**NOTE:** If a foul is not called before the shooter takes a subsequent shot, and makes legal contact with a ball of their actual category (in 8-Ball) or the lowest numbered object ball on the table (in 9-Ball), it is too late to call the foul. In addition, the following rules will then apply depending on the format:

- **8-Ball** - Once a player makes legal contact with the 8-ball, the player assumes control of that category of wrongly pocketed balls and can win the game by legally pocketing the 8-ball. In addition, if the sitting player does not call a foul before the opponent's turn ends, and subsequently contacts the wrong ball during their turn, both players will assume the new category of balls for the remainder of the game.
- **9-Ball** - Any balls pocketed prior to the foul being called will be marked as dead balls, except the 9-ball, which will be spotted.

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## 6. COMBINATION SHOTS

Combination shots are legal, but striking the correct ball first is required.

- **8-Ball** - The 8-ball may not be contacted first. If a player does not pocket one of their balls, but pockets an opponent's ball, they lose their turn. No pocketed ball is spotted.
- **9-Ball** - The lowest numbered ball on the table must be struck first. A player is credited with all balls they legally pocket after striking the lowest numbered ball on the table.

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## 7. POCKETED BALLS

Balls must remain in a pocket to be legal. If any ball, including the cue ball, goes in a pocket, but bounces back onto the playing surface, it is not considered pocketed and must be played from where it lies. The shooter does not need to designate their intended ball or pocket during the shot, except when they are legally shooting the 8-ball.

**NOTE 1:** Once a ball has stopped all motion, it cannot move again without outside forces affecting it. Therefore, if a ball which has been hanging in a pocket for more than a few seconds suddenly drops, it is to be placed back on the table where it was originally sitting.

**NOTE 2:** If two balls become jammed in a pocket and are leaning off the edge of the slate to some degree, they are deemed pocketed. Drop them in the pocket and resume playing unless doing so ends the game.

## 8. BALLS ON THE FLOOR

Object balls that get knocked off the playing surface will be spotted on the foot spot. If the foot spot is taken, the ball will be placed directly behind the foot spot, as close to the foot spot as possible. If two or more balls are knocked on the floor, they are placed in numerical order with the lowest numbered ball closest to the foot spot. Spotted balls are placed frozen to one another.

- **8-Ball** - It might occur that a player legally pockets a ball while simultaneously knocking some other ball(s) on the floor. In this situation, it is still their turn and the ball(s) is/are not spotted until their turn ends. If the ball on the floor is one of the shooter's balls, then it is spotted when the shooter has pocketed all of their other balls. If it is the 8-ball that is knocked on the floor, the shooter loses the game.
- **9-Ball** - Balls that get knocked off the playing surface will be **immediately** spotted on the foot spot. The 9-ball is spotted:
  - a. Anytime it is knocked off the table other than when it is pocketed.
  - b. Anytime it is pocketed and the shooter scratches or otherwise fouls.

## 9. ACCIDENTALLY MOVED BALLS

Accidentally moved balls must be replaced, unless any of the accidentally moved balls make contact with the cue ball. If accidentally moved balls make contact with the cue ball, it is a ball-in-hand foul, and no balls get replaced.

- If the accidental movement occurs between shots, the ball must be replaced by the opponent before the shot is taken.
- If the accidental movement occurs during a shot, all balls accidentally moved must be replaced by the opponent after the shot is over and all balls have stopped rolling.

**NOTE:** An object ball that is in motion and makes accidental contact with a bridge, cue stick, etc. is not replaced.

If, during the course of the shot, another ball stops in the position previously occupied by the accidentally moved ball, the opponent must place the accidentally moved ball, in a fair manner, as close as possible to its original position.

## 10. CLOSE HITS

Potential bad hit situations are usually fairly obvious. Disputes over these situations can almost always be avoided by having a third party, agreed upon by both shooters, watch the shot. The sitting team should protect itself by stopping the game prior to the shot. The shooter is required to stop if their opponent wants the shot watched. Once an agreed upon third party is asked to watch the shot, the third party's call will stand and cannot be disputed.

In general, the shooter has the advantage in close hit situations. If the outside party cannot determine which ball was struck first, such as a simultaneous hit, the call goes to the shooter. Teams involved in repeatedly calling bad hits without third party verification may be subject to a sportsmanship violation and may have points deducted at the discretion of Local League Management.

**NOTE:** If a third party is not asked to watch the hit, and the hit is disputed, the call will tend to favor the shooter.

## 11. ONE FOOT ON THE FLOOR

When a bridge is available, at least one foot must be on the floor while shooting. Failure to keep at least one foot on the floor is not a foul, but may result in a sportsmanship violation. Local League Management cannot guarantee the presence of a bridge, and some Host Locations do not have them. A team that carries their own bridge may only use it if they are willing to share it with the opposing team since refusing to do so would provide an unfair advantage. If a bridge is not available, House Rules prevail.

- **Wheelchair players** - Players shooting from a wheelchair must remain seated in their wheelchair while shooting. If a player decides to exit the wheelchair to perform a shot, they must fully exit the chair. Players may not execute shots while “half-in, half-out” of a wheelchair.

**NOTE:** Players who have a legitimate need to use a stool, due to their height, are allowed to use one, provided they are able to move the stool

by themselves and keep both feet on the stool. Additionally, when racking they may stand on a stool or have a teammate assist them.

## 12. MARKING THE TABLE

No one is allowed to mark the cloth in any way, including, but not limited to, using chalk to draw a line or wetting a finger to dampen the cloth. Teams may be subject to sportsmanship violations for marking the cloth. It is permissible to set a piece of chalk on the hard surface of the rail.

## 13. STALEMATES

In the unlikely event that a game should become stalemated, meaning that neither player can, or wants to, make use of ball-in-hand, the balls are reracked and the player that had the break at the start of the stalemated game breaks again. A game shall be considered a stalemate when both players or teams agree. There is no minimum number of turns that must occur before a game is stalemated.

To score a stalemated game in:

- **8-Ball** - Put an "X" across the entire game box. The innings and Defensive Shots for the stalemated game do not count.
- **9-Ball** - The game ends but the points earned stand. The innings and Defensive Shots remain and all balls left on the table are marked as dead balls.

## 14. FROZEN BALLS

A frozen ball is a ball that is touching either another ball or a rail. In order for the frozen ball rule to be in effect, the ball must be declared "frozen" and verified as such by the shooter and their opponent. If the players in the match cannot agree, an agreed upon third party may be asked to determine if a ball is frozen.

**Object ball frozen to a rail** - To make a legal shot, after contacting a ball that is frozen to a rail, the shooter must either:

- Drive the cue ball to any rail after the cue ball touches the frozen ball.
- Drive the frozen ball to another rail or into a pocket.
- Drive the frozen ball away from the rail and into another ball which, in turn, causes the frozen ball to hit any rail or go into a pocket, or causes the other ball to hit any rail or go into a pocket.

To make a legal shot, after simultaneous contact between a frozen ball and the rail it is frozen to, the shooter must either:

- Drive the cue ball to another rail.
- Drive the frozen ball to another rail or into a pocket.
- Drive the cue ball off the rail and into another ball which, in turn, causes the cue ball to hit any rail, or causes the other ball to hit any rail or go into a pocket.
- Drive the frozen ball off the rail and into another ball which, in turn, causes the frozen ball to hit any rail, or causes the other ball to hit any rail or go into a pocket.

**Cue ball frozen to your own object ball** - If the cue ball causes the object ball to move (by exerting force into the frozen ball, not by breaking contact with the frozen ball), it is considered to be contacted during the shot.

- **8-Ball** - If you are shooting away from the object ball the cue ball is frozen to, in order to make a legal shot, you must contact another object ball, and then drive a ball to a rail or into a pocket. If the cue ball is frozen to the last ball of your category, the cue ball must separate from the object ball, then come back and make contact with the ball it was originally frozen to and drive a ball to a rail or into a pocket.
- **9-Ball** - If you are shooting away from the object ball you are frozen to, in order to make a legal shot you must contact the lowest numbered ball and drive a ball to a rail or pocket a ball. If the cue ball is frozen to the next ball in the rotation, the cue ball must separate from the object ball, then come back and make contact with the ball it was frozen to, and after contact, drive a ball to a rail or into a pocket.

**Cue ball frozen to your opponent's ball** - You must shoot away from the opponent's ball. If the cue ball causes the opponent's ball to move, which does not include breaking contact with the frozen ball, it will result in a foul.

## 15. FOULS

If any of the following fouls are committed, the penalty is ball-in-hand for the opposing player. Make certain you have ball-in-hand before you touch the cue ball by confirming it with your opponent. Ball-in-hand



is the advantage given to a player when their opponent scratches or otherwise fouls, whereupon the player may place the cue ball anywhere on the playing surface.

**EXCEPTION:** In 8-Ball, a scratch on the break requires the ball-in-hand to be executed from behind the head string and contact made with a ball outside the head string.

Even after having addressed the cue ball a player may, if not satisfied with the placement, make further adjustments with their hand, cue stick or any other reasonable piece of equipment.

Only the player or the Team Captain may officially call a foul, although anyone may suggest to the player or the Team Captain that a foul should be called.

**NOTE:** A foul that is not called when it occurs cannot be called once the next shot has been taken.

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### **A FOUL THAT IS NOT CALLED WHEN IT OCCURS CANNOT BE CALLED ONCE THE NEXT SHOT HAS BEEN TAKEN.**

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These are the only fouls resulting in ball-in-hand. All other violations are sportsmanship violations. The ball-in-hand fouls are:

- a. If the cue ball goes in a pocket, on the floor, or otherwise ends up off the playing surface.
- b. Failure to hit the correct ball first.
- c. Failure to hit a rail or pocket a ball after contact. A rail must be struck by either the cue ball or any other ball after the cue ball contacts the object ball. If the ball bounces back onto the playing surface, it is considered to have struck a rail.
- d. If, after making contact with a ball that is frozen to a rail, the shooter fails to:
  - Drive the cue ball to any rail after the cue ball touches the frozen ball.
  - Drive the frozen ball to another rail or into a pocket.
  - Drive the frozen ball away from the rail and into another ball which, in turn, causes the frozen ball to hit any rail or go into a pocket, or causes the other ball to hit any rail or go into a pocket.

If, after making simultaneous contact between a frozen ball and the rail it is frozen to, the shooter fails to:

- Drive the cue ball to another rail.
  - Drive the frozen ball to another rail or into a pocket.
  - Drive the cue ball off the rail and into another ball which, in turn, causes the cue ball to hit any rail, or causes the other ball to hit any rail or go into a pocket.
  - Drive the frozen ball off the rail and into another ball which, in turn, causes the frozen ball to hit any rail, or causes the other ball to hit any rail or go into a pocket.
- e. Intentionally jumping a cue ball over another ball by scooping it into the air.
  - f. Receiving advice regarding game strategy from a fellow player, other than your designated coach, during a time-out.
  - g. Touching or causing the cue ball to move, outside of a ball-in-hand situation.
  - h. Altering the course of a moving cue ball, including a double-hit.
  - i. Anytime the cue ball makes contact with an accidentally moved ball.
  - j. The cue ball does not touch any object ball during the course of a shot.
  - k. Touching another ball on the table, while placing or adjusting the position of the cue ball, during a ball-in-hand.

**DOUBLES ONLY - Shooting Out Of Rotation.** Once a team has shot out of rotation, the foul has occurred. If the sitting team does not call the foul before the next shot is taken, they do not receive ball-in-hand and the team that shot out of rotation will assume the new rotation for the remainder of the match.

- **8-Ball** - If the 8-ball is pocketed during the shot, it is loss of game, if called.
- **9-Ball** - If the 9-ball is pocketed during the shot, the 9-ball is spotted and the opponents receive ball-in-hand.

## 16. HOW TO WIN A GAME

### 8-BALL

- a. You pocket all the balls of your category and legally pocket the 8-ball in a properly marked pocket.

- b.** Your opponent pockets the 8-ball out-of-turn or knocks it on the floor.
- c.** Your opponent pockets the 8-ball in the wrong pocket.
- d.** Your opponent fails to properly mark the pocket where the 8-ball is pocketed, and you call loss of game.
- e.** Your opponent fouls the cue ball and pockets the 8-ball.
- f.** Your opponent alters the course of the 8-ball or the cue ball in an attempt to prevent a loss.
- g.** Your opponent scratches or knocks the cue ball off the table when playing the 8-ball.

**NOTE 1:** If your opponent is shooting at the 8-ball and misses it altogether, commonly referred to as a table scratch, they have fouled and you receive ball-in-hand. You do not win because of this foul.

**NOTE 2:** You may not play the 8-ball at the same time you play the last ball of your category. The 8-ball must be pocketed through a separate shot. If you pocket the 8-ball at the same time you pocket the last ball of your category, you lose the game.

### **Marking the pocket**

- a.** A coaster or some other reasonable marker must be placed next to the shooter's intended pocket.
- b.** Marking the pocket with chalk is not recommended.
- c.** Both players may use the same marker.
- d.** Only one marker should remain on the table at a time.
- e.** If the marker is already at the intended pocket from a previous attempt or game, it is not necessary to touch it, pick it up or reposition it.

**NOTE:** Making contact with a marker is not a foul. If a pocket marker is placed on the rail and accidentally interferes with the shot (either in a positive or negative way), the shot stands.

### **9-BALL**

You legally pocket the 9-ball.

# THE EQUALIZER® HANDICAP SYSTEM

## SECTION 4

APA developed its own unique handicap system, *The Equalizer*®, which makes it possible for players of all abilities to compete on a nearly even level. *The Equalizer*® requires lesser skilled players to win fewer games in 8-Ball, or earn fewer points in 9-Ball, to beat higher skilled opponents. In golf and bowling you give or get strokes or pins. In this League, you give or get games or points. The number of games or points players race to is determined by comparing their skill levels.

Accurate and conscientious scorekeeping is the greatest contribution every member can make to the smooth operation of *The Equalizer*® and to the prevention of handicap manipulation. *The Equalizer*® works best when teams keep score properly. The only way a team can get away with manipulating *The Equalizer*® is **IF YOU LET THEM**. Your Local League Management uses information from the scoresheet you submit to evaluate handicaps. You improve the League by keeping score according to the rules stated in this manual. Your efforts will be appreciated by your teammates, your fellow members, your Local League Management and APA.

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### 1. HOW HANDICAPS ARE DETERMINED

Your Local League Management reviews, calculates and updates players' skill levels on a regular basis. Your skill level (SL) determines how many games you have to win in 8-Ball, or points you must earn in 9-Ball, in order to win your match. Calculating skill levels involves a number of factors and the application of specific mathematical formulas. The factors considered include, but are not limited to, the data on the weekly scoresheets, win/loss records, Tournament performance, feedback from Handicap Advisory Committees, and other considerations.

## 2. HOW TO GET STARTED

Generally, all NEW players will start at a SL3.

**NOTE 1:** Local League Management is authorized to assign a new player a higher starting skill level if they believe the higher skill level more accurately reflects the player's true pool playing ability.

**NOTE 2:** Players with an established skill level in the 8-Ball format will start play in 9-Ball with their 8-Ball skill level; players with an established skill level in the 9-Ball format will start play in 8-Ball with their 9-Ball skill level, unless they are a SL1, SL8 or SL9 in 9-Ball. A SL1 in 9-Ball will begin as a SL2 in 8-Ball; a SL8 or SL9 in 9-Ball will begin as a SL7 in 8-Ball.

After your first match, your skill level is calculated. It is against the rules for a player to attempt to reestablish their skill level. You cannot rejoin the League or transfer to another League area and start playing as a non-rated player. You are obligated to disclose the fact that you are a former member or a current member in another League area and that you have an existing skill level.

## 3. GAMES MUST WIN CHARTS

Your skill level and that of your opponent will determine the number of games in 8-Ball or points in 9-Ball you will race to during your match. All scoresheets include a Games Must Win, or Points Required To Win chart to assist you on League night.

**8-Ball Games Must Win Chart**

Your Opponent

You	Skill Level	2	3	4	5	6	7
		2	3	4	5	6	7
	2	2/2	2/3	2/4	2/5	2/6	2/7
	3	3/2	2/2	2/3	2/4	2/5	2/6
	4	4/2	3/2	3/3	3/4	3/5	2/5
	5	5/2	4/2	4/3	4/4	4/5	3/5
	6	6/2	5/2	5/3	5/4	5/5	4/5
	7	7/2	6/2	5/2	5/3	5/4	5/5

**8-Ball Doubles Games Must Win Chart**

Your Opponent

You	Skill Level	6 or less	7	8	9	10	11	12
		6 or less	7	8	9	10	11	12
	6 or less	2/2	2/3	2/3	2/4	2/4	2/5	2/5
	7	3/2	3/3	3/3	3/4	3/4	2/4	2/5
	8	3/2	3/3	3/3	3/4	3/4	3/5	3/5
	9	4/2	4/3	4/3	4/4	4/4	3/4	3/5
	10	4/2	4/3	4/3	4/4	4/4	3/4	3/5
	11	5/2	4/2	5/3	4/3	4/3	4/4	4/5
	12	5/2	5/2	5/3	5/3	5/3	5/4	5/5

In 8-Ball, find your skill level (singles) or combined skill level (doubles) along the left side of the chart and your opponent's skill level along the top of the chart. Track to the right from your skill level and down from

your opponent's skill level until the two tracks meet. In that block, the first number is the number you race to, and the second is the number your opponent races to.

**9-Ball Points Required  
To Win Chart**

Player's Skill Level	Points Must Win
1	14
2	19
3	25
4	31
5	38
6	46
7	55
8	65
9	75

**9-Ball Doubles Points  
Required To Win Chart**

Player's Skill Level	Points Must Win
4 or less	19
5	22
6	25
7	28
8	31
9	35
10	38
11	42
12	46

The 9-Ball charts indicate the number of points each skill level (singles) or combined skill level (doubles) is required to attain in order to win a match. The individual match is over once a player (singles) or team (doubles) attains the number of points indicated on the Points Required To Win Chart.

More information on *The Equalizer*® is available at [poolplayers.com](http://poolplayers.com).

# HOW TO USE SCORESHEETS AND SCORE MATCHES

## SECTION 5

Scoresheets should be filled out neatly, completely, accurately and signed by both Team Captains. Penalties may be assessed for repeated illegible, incomplete or incorrect scoresheets.

**NOTE:** Failure to sign the scoresheet does not constitute a dispute or protest.

The following information is printed across the top of all scoresheets:

- **Team Sheet For** - The team number and name.
- **For Week #** - Indicates the current week of play followed by the number of weeks in the session, along with the date and time of the match.
- **Division** - The name of the division and session information.
- **Division Rep(s)** - The name and phone number of the person to contact if you have questions.

**Start and End Times** - All scoresheets have a space to record the start and end times of team matches in order to assist Local League Management in identifying teams with slow play issues. APA's goal is to have all teams "Home by 11."

- **8-Ball** - The start time is located in the upper section of the scoresheet, to the right of the Skill Level Chart. The space for the end time is located in the upper section of the scoresheet, to the left of the Match Points Earned Chart.
- **8-Ball Doubles** - The space for Start and End Times is located in the upper left-hand corner, just below the APA logo.
- **9-Ball & 9-Ball Doubles** - The space for Start and End Times is located along the top right-hand corner, on the scoring side of the scoresheet.

Watch APA's  
"Home By 11"  
Video



- **Masters** - The space for Start and End Times is located in the upper right-hand corner.

**Division Standings Through Last Week** - The Division Standings are printed on each scoresheet and show each team's total points and the number of points each team earned the previous week.

**Rosters** - The scoresheet will include each team's roster along with each team's name, Host Location, membership numbers, skill levels (except in Masters Divisions) and the number of matches each player has played during the session. The scoresheet will also indicate if the team has any credits or past dues.

Remember to inform the opposing team of any roster changes prior to starting the team match. Indicate any roster changes on the scoresheet next to your team's roster by doing the following:

- **To Drop a Player** - Draw a line through their name and write the word "drop" next to it.
- **To Add a Player** - Write the word "add" along with their name and skill level (except in Masters) by your team roster.

**Declaring Players** - A coin toss determines which team must declare the first player. A space is provided to assist in tracking which team chooses first in each match. That space is located:

- **8-Ball** - Directly above the player name block, titled "Team #".
- **9-Ball** - The top left corner on the scoring side of the scoresheet.

**Fees Section** - Team Captains should complete the financial section, located in the lower left portion of the scoresheet. All money placed in the envelope with the scoresheet should be itemized. It is important to list annual membership dues along with the names of the members who are paying, as well as any non-standard payments. Players in areas with an electronic payment option should check their Local Bylaws for the information required in this section.

**Table Size Section** - *The Equalizer*® takes into consideration the size of the table(s) the match was played on. Mark the appropriate box to indicate the table size used for the match.

- **8-Ball & 8-Ball Doubles** - It is located just below the Captains' Signature Section.
- **9-Ball & 9-Ball Doubles** - It is located directly above the Captains' Signature Section.



**Next Scheduled Match** - The team number, name, date and location of your next scheduled match is shown in this section and can be found:

- **8-Ball & 8-Ball Doubles** - Directly below the Table Size Section.
- **9-Ball & 9-Ball Doubles** - Directly below the Rosters.
- **Masters** - Directly below the Captains' Signature Section.

**Message Center** - Located at the very bottom of all scoresheets, this area may be used by Local League Management to send messages to teams or by teams to write messages to Local League Management.

## HOW TO SCORE 8-BALL

### A. Player Information

The winner of the lag is listed on top. Fill in the player's team number, last name and first initial, along with their player number shown next to their name on the team roster. Fill in the same information for the opponent on the bottom. Refer to the "Games Must Win" chart and fill in the number of games each player will need to win.

- **Doubles Format** - Fill in the team name, both players' last names and first initials.

Refer to the "Doubles Race Chart" on the scoresheet and fill in the number of games each team will need to win.

Scan to watch  
a video on  
8-Ball  
scorekeeping



### B. Innings And Time-Outs

An inning is a completed cycle in which both players (singles) or teams (doubles) have had a turn at the table. The player or team who won the lag shoots in the top half of each inning while the player or team who lost the lag shoots in the bottom half of each inning throughout the match.

**An inning is not complete, and therefore not marked, until the player (singles) or team (doubles) who lost the lag and is listed on the bottom, misses or fouls.**

**DO NOT  
MARK AN  
INNINGS  
BECAUSE THE  
MATCH IS OVER**

- Game Blocks** - Each game has its own block. All information pertaining to a game should be written in that game's corresponding block, with the exception of Defensive Shots. In the game block:
  - Track the number of innings in each game by marking a tally for each inning. **Mark Complete Innings Only.** If a

player Breaks-and-Runs a rack, ending the game or match, an inning is not marked.

- Indicate who won the game by darkening the block in the right-hand portion of each game block (upper or lower) that corresponds with the winning player.
- Mark Early 8s (E8), 8-ball Scratch (8S), 8-ball Wrong Pocket (8WP), 8-on-the-Break (8OB), and 8-Ball Break-and-Run (BR) on your scoresheet in the game block in which they occurred.
- Indicate time-outs taken by marking a “T” in the corner triangles of the game blocks. Use the upper two triangles for the player or team listed on top and the lower two for the player or team listed on the bottom. Always mark the first time-out in the triangle on the left side of the game block.

**b. Total Innings Block** - Total all the innings for the entire match and enter the number in this block.

### C. 8-Break and 8-B & Run Blocks

There are separate blocks to record these accomplishments. Use the appropriate blocks to mark the total 8-ball breaks (8OB) and the total Break-and-Runs (BR) for each player.

### D. Defensive Shots Block

Mark a tally for each shot where there is no **INTENT** by the shooter to legally pocket a ball of their category. Total and circle the number of Defensive Shots for each player at the end of the match. If there are no Defensive Shots in a match, write “No DS” in the block. Proper scorekeeping requires conscientious marking of intentionally missed shots and helps ensure the accuracy of all skill levels.

Scan to watch  
a video on  
Defensive Shots



**NOTE:** The marking of a Defensive Shot does not affect the marking of an inning; therefore, if the player listed on the bottom plays a Defensive Shot, mark both the Defensive Shot and the inning. If the player on top plays a Defensive Shot, only mark a tally in the Defensive Shots block.

### E. Games Won Block

Record the total number of games won by each player (singles) or each team (doubles) at the end of the match.

## F. Match Points Earned Block

The number of Match Points Earned is determined by the number of games the losing player (singles) or team (doubles) won, as indicated on the Match Points Earned chart on the scoresheet.

## G. Running Total Block

Utilize the Running Total block to add up the Match Points Earned for each of the matches played.

## H. Team Captains' Signature Section

- a. **Team Points:** Fill in the total number of Match Points Earned by each team in the block provided at the end of the Team Captains' signature line.
- b. **Captains' Signature:** Verify the total Match Points Earned for each team and sign both scoresheets.

## HOW TO SCORE 9-BALL

9-Ball scoresheets are two-sided. The scoring is done on the back side, with the rest of the information needed printed on the front side. In order to avoid discrepancies, scorekeepers should confirm the score after each rack. At the end of each rack, the points earned by the two players, plus the number of dead balls, will add up to 10.

Scan to watch  
a video on  
9-Ball  
scorekeeping



### A. Player Information

The winner of the lag is listed on top. Refer to the rosters to fill in the player's team number, player number, last name and first initial, and skill level. Refer to the "Points Required to Win" chart and fill in the number of points the player must earn to win the match. Fill in the same information for the player who lost the lag on the bottom.

### B. The Score Section

The score section includes six rows. The top and bottom rows consist of numbers used for tracking points as the shooters pocket balls. The other rows are for recording the players' information, score, innings and dead balls.

Indicate points earned by diagonally crossing out a number on the top row for the player (singles) or team (doubles) listed on top, or the bottom row for the player (singles) or team (doubles) listed on the bottom. It is recommended you switch from left diagonal lines (\) to right diagonal

lines (/) at the conclusion of each rack in order to help track how many points each player earned during each rack. This practice helps you avoid point discrepancies.

**NOTE:** Balls 1 through 8 are worth one point each. The 9-ball is worth two points.

- **Score:** There are two score lines provided, one for each player (singles) or team (doubles). Record the number of points earned by the player (singles) or team (doubles) at the end of each rack.
- **Innings:** Make a tally mark to indicate each completed inning. An inning is a completed cycle in which both players (singles) or teams (doubles) have had a turn at the table. Separate the number of innings played during each rack by drawing a vertical line to the right of the tally marks at the end of each rack. An inning is not complete, and therefore not marked, until the player (singles) or team (doubles) who lost the lag, and is listed on the bottom, misses or fouls. If a player makes a 9-on-the-Snap or Breaks-and-Runs, mark 9OS or BR instead of zero.

**NOTE:** Mark Complete Innings Only.

If a player (singles) or team (doubles) Breaks-and-Runs a rack, whether another game is needed to determine the outcome or not, the inning has not

**MARK  
COMPLETE  
INNINGS ONLY**

ended because the player's turn has not ended. An inning is never marked until the player (singles) or team (doubles) who lost the lag and is the bottom half of the inning throughout the entire match, misses or fouls.

- **Dead Balls:** Record any balls not credited to either player (singles) or team (doubles), such as ball(s) made during a scratch, ball(s) made during a foul, or on the table when the 9-ball is made or a stalemate occurs. The 9-Ball is never a dead ball. It is spotted.

### C. The 9-Snap and 9-B & Run Blocks

Mark a tally in the appropriate block to record 9-on-the-Snaps and Break-and-Runs for each player.

### D. The Total Innings Block

Total all the innings for the entire match and enter the number in this block.

## E. The Defensive Shots Block

Mark a tally for each shot where there is no **INTENT** by the shooter to legally pocket a ball. Total and circle the number of Defensive Shots for each player at the end of the match. If there are no Defensive Shots played in a match, mark “No DS” in the block. Proper scorekeeping requires conscientious marking of intentionally missed shots and helps to ensure the accuracy of skill levels. The marking of a Defensive Shot does not affect the marking of an inning.

## F. The Total Points Block

Enter the total number of points scored by each player (singles) or team (doubles). If a player (singles) or team (doubles) earns more points than the number required for them to win the individual match, do not mark the excess points.

## G. Match Points Earned Block

The number of Match Points Earned is determined by the number of balls made by the losing player (singles) or team (doubles). Fill in the block using the Score of Match chart located on the front of the scoresheet.

- **Singles Format:** A total of 20 points are available in each match.
- **Doubles Format:** A total of 40 points are available in each match.

## H. Running Total Block

Utilize the Running Total block to add up the Match Points Earned for each of the individual matches played.

## I. Team Captains' Signature Section

A space is provided along the bottom of the scoresheet for the Team Captain's signature, team name, team number and total Match Points Earned for each team.

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# HOW TO SCORE MASTERS

Masters is a non-handicapped format; therefore, it is only necessary to indicate the winner of each game.

Once the players lag, the winner of the lag has the choice of format to be played first, 8-Ball or 9-Ball, or the first break in the match.

## A. The Player Section

List the player who will break the first rack on top. Fill in the team numbers, players' last names and first initials and the players' numbers from the rosters above.

## B. The Scoring Section

Once a format has been chosen, the entire set of that format must be completed before moving to the other format. There are separate blocks for each game in each format.

- a. **9-Ball Games & 8-Ball Games:** Write an "X" on the appropriate game block to indicate the winner of each game. Use the top row for the player listed on top and the bottom row for the player listed on the bottom.
- b. **9OS, 9B&R, 8OB and 8B&R:** Make a tally mark for each 9-on-the-Snap, 9-Ball Break-and-Run, 8-on-the-Break and 8-Ball Break-and-Run for each player. Use the top row for the player listed on top and the bottom row for the player listed on the bottom.
- c. **Score:** Write in the total number of games won by each player, using the top block for the player listed on the top and the bottom block for the player listed on the bottom.

## C. Team Captains' Signature Section

A space is provided along the bottom of the scoresheet for the Team Captain's signature, team number and total Match Points Earned for each team.

More information on scorekeeping is available at [poolplayers.com](http://poolplayers.com).

# CONDUCT DURING LEAGUE PLAY

## SECTION 6

All members are required to exercise good sportsmanship and proper conduct. Individuals who cannot conduct themselves in a sportsmanlike manner will be removed from the League. The purpose of this section is to outline what action(s) Local League Management are advised to take when misconduct occurs during League play. Your League Operator is responsible for imposing sanctions and penalties on those players and/or teams that fail to practice good sportsmanship or who don't demonstrate proper conduct. The guidelines contained herein relate to **PHYSICAL CONTACT and VERBAL ABUSE**. There is room for judgment in some areas and not others.

When misconduct occurs, the League Operator can take immediate action, and/or follow-up action.

- **Immediate Action** is an action that immediately impacts the result of the team match. Immediate action impacts the entire team, and may affect innocent individuals.
- **Follow-Up Action** is an action taken after the fact, specifically against the individual(s) involved in the misconduct.

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### 1. PHYSICAL CONTACT

Hostile physical contact is not tolerated. Hostile physical contact includes, but is not limited to, bumping, shoving, pushing or hitting. Although this contact normally involves members engaged in League play, Local League Management should impose a penalty when a non-member is involved if it is deemed the non-member involved is *associated with* one of the teams. Whether a non-member is *associated with* one of the teams is a judgment call to be made at the sole discretion of Local League Management.

**IMMEDIATE ACTION** - If hostile physical contact occurs, the match is over. There is one issue for the League Operator to resolve in such a situation: whether only one team was guilty of hostile physical contact or both teams were guilty of hostile physical contact. When

hostile physical contact occurs, your League Operator must exercise one of the following two options:

- a. **Where only one team was involved.** If it occurred during League play, the offending team loses all points. The non-offending team will receive bye points. If the match took place during Session Playoffs or any type of Tournament, the non-offending team would advance to the next round.
- b. **Where both teams were involved.** If this occurred during League play, neither team would receive any points for the night. If it occurred during Session Playoffs or Tournament play, both teams would be disqualified.

Your League Operator has no alternative other than to implement one of the two options above. Local League Management cannot consider who started it, nor should they consider whether the retaliation, if any occurred, was justified. The only way both teams can avoid the same penalty is for one of the teams to refuse to retaliate no matter what provocation they may have to endure.

## 2. VERBAL ABUSE

Verbal abuse consists of any name calling, threats or any other language that could reasonably be considered harassment, an effort to provoke a player or team, or an attempt to cause embarrassment to the opponent. Local League Management will always have to make judgments in this area.

**Immediate Action** - If your League Operator can determine that only one team, or person associated with that team, engaged in verbal abuse, the individual match must be forfeited to the non-offending player. A team will be held responsible for any verbal abuse coming from the players on its roster, or anyone who is *associated with* the team. If your League Operator determines that the verbal abuse put the non-offending team in an unfair competitive situation, they have the discretion to declare a forfeit of the entire team match. If both teams engage in verbal abuse, your League Operator has discretion to penalize the teams or players by altering the final results of the team match or of individual match(es). If a team engages in verbal abuse during Session Playoffs or Tournaments, your League Operator has the authority to disqualify the team, as such behavior is extremely disruptive.



**NOTE:** It is not considered harassment to root for your team, but to ensure good sportsmanship and to avoid conflict, and potential penalties, do not do it while your opponent is shooting.

### 3. FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS

In addition to the actions a League Operator takes regarding verbal or physical abuse, they may also take follow-up actions. Follow-up action addresses the long-term issues related to incidents of misconduct. Through follow-up action, Local League Management has the opportunity to evaluate who started the problem.

Local League Management must take action against any member(s) involved in any incidence of physical contact that is associated in any way with League play. It is not acceptable for a couple of members to take their fight outside or to agree to meet and fight it out at a later date. If they do fight at a later date, and Local League Management determines it originated during League play, then Local League Management must take action. A fight that occurs outside, but during League time, will be treated the same as one that occurs inside. If a player threatens to wait outside until the match is over, Local League Management should rule that the entire team match is forfeited. A threat to commit physical abuse will be treated as if the person making the threat actually committed the threatened act. Local League Management must use its best judgment when determining what occurred and what the appropriate response is.

Follow-up action by Local League Management may result in penalties such as probation, suspension and permanent termination of a player's or players' APA membership. Local League Management has discretion regarding what penalty is appropriate, but the following guidelines should be observed:

- a. Any person who starts a fight or brawl should have their APA membership terminated.
- b. Generally, a person who gets into a fight or a brawl defending themselves should be suspended for at least one month, if it is their first violation of these Rules of Conduct, or longer if they have previously violated these Rules, or committed other sportsmanship violations.
- c. Generally, a person who consistently uses foul, provocative or intimidating language should receive a six month suspension,

though the suspension could be longer if they have committed a prior violation of these Rules, or committed other sportsmanship violations.

- d. Generally, a person who engages in a lesser degree of verbal abuse should be placed on probation, or suspension, depending on what the Local League Management deems appropriate under the circumstances.

**Probation Terms** - A player who is placed on probation must be a current APA member and actively participating throughout the entire term of the probation to complete their probation period. Players who drop out or quit while on probation, and who later seek to return to League play, will be required to serve the amount of time that was left on their probation period at the time they dropped or quit.

**Suspension Terms** - Players who are suspended may not participate in any League activities and forfeit their eligibility to participate in any Tournament(s) that may occur during their suspension term. It is recommended that players who are suspended not attend League matches. Those that attend League matches while on suspension and are disruptive face stiffer penalties. All suspension terms will be followed by a one-year probationary term.

Any individual or team suspended from League play will immediately lose certain other membership privileges, including but not limited to, eligibility and/or qualification for Tournaments, until and unless the suspension is lifted.

Once a player is suspended, that player will not have the privilege to coach their team, keep score, strategize or put up players until their suspension has been lifted. Breaking this rule may result in a longer suspension.

You joined this League to have a good time and so did other members. Every member has the right to be treated in a sportsmanlike manner, and members who display offensive behavior will not be tolerated. It is important that all team members be aware of APA's Rules of Conduct. Teams should consider dropping anyone from their roster who does not agree to comply with these rules.

Tournaments Come and Go... the Title

# "U.S. Amateur Champion"

*LASTS FOREVER*



## Compete in the

# PRELIMINARY ROUNDS

**Preliminary Rounds Held in September**

Visit [poolplayers.com/usam](http://poolplayers.com/usam) for participating locations across North America.

**Register Online** at [poolplayers.com/usam](http://poolplayers.com/usam)

1-800-3-RACK-EM

Open to all amateur players—APA Members and non-APA members—age 18 or older.

# TOURNAMENT INFORMATION AND RULES

## SECTION 7

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### GENERAL TOURNAMENT INFORMATION

All APA Tournaments require participation in League play. Tournaments offered in your Local League area are subject to the eligibility and qualification requirements set by Local League Management and distributed prior to the event. In general, APA requires all Tournaments to be played using Official APA Game Rules and to pay back 100% of entry fees in some form. In some circumstances Tournaments may be specifically advertised as charity events or fundraisers and may pay back less than 100% of entries as long as it is communicated prior to the start of the event that the remainder is being donated.

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### CHAMPIONSHIP TOURNAMENTS

In order to protect the integrity of its Championships, APA reserves the right to declare an area ineligible to participate if the League Operator does not accurately follow procedures outlined by APA, properly apply *The Equalizer*® and/or take other necessary steps to ensure that players are properly handicapped.

#### 1. Poolplayer Championships

The 8-Ball Classic and the 9-Ball Shootout are singles events tiered by skill level and seeded within each tier. The game rules are the same as those used during regular, handicapped League play. An entry fee is charged at the Local Level.

After you qualify, you are not required to pay any additional entry fees to participate at the Regional or Championship Levels. All of the rules pertaining to singles events are listed on the Local Qualifier Boards and at poolplayers.com.

### a. Area Eligibility

A League area must have at least 12 teams in the standard 8-Ball or 9-Ball format in order to qualify players to the corresponding Championship.

### b. Player Eligibility

To be eligible for the 8-Ball Classic or 9-Ball Shootout, a player:

- Must be at least 18 years of age.
- Must be a current member on an active team in the corresponding format.
- Must have an established handicap in the corresponding format. An established handicap is one that is based on a minimum of 10 actual match scores.
- Must have a minimum of 10 actual match scores within the previous two years. Local Qualifier Board scores do not count towards the minimum requirement.

### c. Tournament Structure

The 8-Ball Classic and 9-Ball Shootout are divided into three levels: the Local Level, the Regional Level, and the Championship Level.

- **Local Level** – Local Qualifier Boards are generally run using a Single Elimination Format, though they may be run in a variety of ways, normally at the discretion of the individual running the Qualifier with approval of Local League Management. Local Qualifiers may be open to all players, or they may be grouped by skill level(s) or other criteria.
- **Regional Level** – Tournaments are run using a Modified Single Elimination Format. Participants are seeded with players at or near their own skill level. Separate Tournament brackets are used for each Skill Level Tier. The Regional Tournaments are divided into two Seasons. Players qualifying January 1 through June 15 will be eligible to participate in Season 1 Regionals, generally held in early October. Players qualifying between June 16 and November 30 will be eligible to participate in Season 2 Regionals, generally held in early March.
- **Championship Level** – All participants receive Travel Assistance and paid accommodations at the Championship Tournament site. Tournaments are run using a Modified

Single Elimination Format. Individual Champions will be crowned in each Skill Level Tier, in each format.

## 2. Showdown Series

The 8-Ball Doubles, 9-Ball Doubles, Jack & Jill, Ladies 8-Ball, Masters, Team Captains and Wheelchair Championships all have their own set of eligibility and qualification requirements available at [poolplayers.com](http://poolplayers.com). Some of the Showdown Series events take place alongside the Poolplayer Championships, while others are scheduled alongside the World Pool Championships. Event dates are also listed at [poolplayers.com](http://poolplayers.com).

## 3. Junior Championships

The Junior Championships are open to members ages 7 to 18 at the time of the event, who are either enrolled as a student or have graduated from high school.

This event is a 9-Ball Modified Single Elimination Format Tournament, bracketed based on the number of participants and seeded by skill level. First and second place winners are guaranteed trophies and other prizes. Please refer to your Local Bylaws for eligibility and qualification requirements. Additional rules and information are available at [poolplayers.com](http://poolplayers.com).

## 4. U.S. Amateur Championships

The U.S. Amateur Championships are open to all players and consist of the U.S. Amateur Championship and the Womens U.S. Amateur Championship. They are the most prestigious non-handicapped Amateur Tournaments conducted by APA. Preliminary rounds are held in various locations throughout North America. Match play is a combination of 8-Ball and 9-Ball games. Rules and additional information are available at [poolplayers.com](http://poolplayers.com).

## 5. World Pool Championships

The APA World Pool Championships include the 8-Ball and 9-Ball World Championships. Each year, in each format, a team is crowned World Champion. *The Equalizer*®, the General Rules and the Game Rules set out in this manual are used in every round of the World Championships.

### a. Area Eligibility

A Local League area must meet certain minimum team counts in order to send teams to participate in the World Championships.

Once the minimums have been met, more teams participating in your area will mean more teams advancing from your area.

- A League area that has 20 or more standard 5-Person teams in a format, participating in the Spring Session of the League year, is eligible to advance at least one team in the corresponding format.
- Areas with 19 or fewer teams are not eligible to advance a team. Only Open 8-Ball teams will count towards the minimum requirement in 8-Ball, and only Open 9-Ball teams will count towards the minimum requirement in 9-Ball.

#### **b. Player Eligibility**

In order to participate in the World Championships a player must:

- Be a member of a World Championship qualified team.
- Have an established handicap based on a minimum of 10 actual match scores in the corresponding format, prior to the end of the Spring Session leading into the World Qualifiers. Matches played during regular session, Playoffs and Tri-Annual Tournaments count towards this minimum requirement. Match scores obtained through participation in other events, prior to having an established handicap, will not count towards the minimum requirement.
- Have played at least four times with the team during the regular Spring Session (prior to Playoffs) leading into the World Qualifier. Local Bylaws may impose additional eligibility requirements.

#### **c. Tournament Structure**

The 8-Ball and 9-Ball Championships consist of two levels: the Local Level and the World Level.

- **Local Level** - The World Qualifiers are held after the conclusion of the Spring Session, normally in late May or early June, and are conducted using Championship Rules.
- **World Level** - The 8-Ball and 9-Ball World Championships represent the culmination of the League year and are held in early to mid-August. Every team that makes it to the World Level is already in the money. Exact prize money breakdown, precise Tournament dates and other information are available at [poolplayers.com](http://poolplayers.com) or by contacting Local League Management or APA.



## WORLD POOL CHAMPIONSHIPS

The Open Division 8-Ball and 9-Ball World Championships have specific eligibility and qualification rules, starting at the Local Level with the World Qualifiers. Areas that have an additional Tournament structure used to narrow the field for the World Qualifiers may use these same rules.

### 1. How To Become A Qualified Team

Teams qualify for their World Qualifier by ending the session as the High Points Finisher, winning a division title or by finishing Playoffs immediately behind a team that is already qualified. At least one team per division qualifies each session. If the division plays all three sessions in the League year, a minimum of three teams will qualify. The only way a team can qualify for the World Championships is through their performance in regular League play and the World Qualifier.

**NOTE:** APA allows Local Leagues to set different qualification requirements in order to accommodate different League sizes and structures. Be sure to check your Local Bylaws for any variances in the qualification structure and requirements.

### 2. Qualification Can Be Lost

Be familiar with all the rules in this section in order to avoid losing qualification. If you have any concerns regarding your team's qualification, please contact your Local League Management.

### 3. Players Must Maintain Current Membership

If your membership is not current, you are not eligible to participate in the World Championships. If any of your teammates are not available at renewal time, consider renewing for them so they do not get dropped from the roster and become ineligible. Notify your Local League Management immediately if a player is accidentally dropped from the roster.

### 4. Qualified Teams Must Maintain Active Status

A team that qualified in the Summer Session must play during the following Fall and Spring Sessions in the League area in which they qualified. A team that qualified in the Fall Session must play during the following Spring Session in the League area in which they qualified. Local Bylaws may impose additional requirements.



## 5. 50% Rule For Qualified Teams

Qualified teams that do not finish in the top half of their division in the session(s) after they qualify are subject to heavy scrutiny of their handicaps and/or potential loss of qualification at the discretion of their League Operator. Summer Session qualified teams must finish in the top half of their division in the subsequent Fall and Spring Sessions leading into the World Qualifier. Fall Session qualified teams must finish in the top half of their division in the subsequent Spring Session of the League year leading into the World Qualifier.

## 6. Spring Rosters Are World Qualifier Rosters

Your roster at the end of the Spring Session will be your team's roster for the World Qualifier. Players who were on the roster when the team qualified, but are not on the roster in the Spring Session leading into the World Qualifier, are not eligible because they are no longer considered part of the team. **THERE ARE NO EXCEPTIONS TO THIS RULE.**

A team with only four available or eligible players on their roster will have to play in the World Qualifier with those four players. All roster changes for qualified teams must be made prior to the teams submitting their week four scoresheets during the Spring Session. All qualified team rosters are frozen at the conclusion of week four. No one may be dropped or added. **THERE ARE NO EXCEPTIONS TO THIS RULE.**

## 7. The Skill Level You Must Play With

Each player will start the World Qualifier and World Championships at their Highest Skill Level. A player's Highest Skill Level is the highest of the following:

- The skill level that the player and team believe represents the player's best playing ability.
- The player's current APA assigned skill level.
- The player's session-ending skill level in the session in which the team qualified for the World Qualifier.
- The player's highest session-ending skill level in any session following the session in which the team qualified.
- The player's highest skill level in any APA League area in which the player currently plays.
- The player's skill level at the end of the World Qualifier in the corresponding League year.

- The skill level they played at during any prior National Singles Championships, National Team Championships, Poolplayer Championships or World Pool Championships.

**Minimum Championship Skill Levels:** During Championship Level Events as well as at the 8-Ball Classic & 9-Ball Shootout Regional Tournaments, ladies may participate at their assigned skill level, even if that assigned skill level is lower than a SL3. All other players must participate at a skill level 3 or higher. To be eligible to participate at a skill level lower than a SL3, the player's State/Province issued picture ID, Military ID or passport photo ID must identify her as female.

### **8. Number Of Scores Handicaps Must Be Based On**

In order to participate in the World Championships, a player must have established their handicap prior to the end of the Spring Session leading into the World Qualifier, in the format in which they are advancing. An established handicap is one that is based on a minimum of 10 lifetime match scores. Matches played during regular session play, Playoffs and Tri-Annals count toward the minimum requirement. Match scores obtained through participation in other events, prior to having an established handicap, do not count towards the minimum requirement.

### **9. Adding A New Player To A Qualified Team In The Spring Session**

Any player being added to a qualified team in the Spring Session should have a skill level based on at least 20 scores. If the player has fewer than 20 scores, that player must be approved by the League Operator prior to being added to the roster. The player's skill level will be subject to heavy scrutiny.

### **10. Number Of Times You Must Have Played With Your Team**

Each player must have played at least four times with the team during the regular Spring Session (prior to Playoffs) leading into the World Qualifier. Players who played less than four matches will be ineligible. Local Bylaws may impose additional eligibility requirements.

### **11. Skill Levels Updated**

A player's skill level may be adjusted during any stage of the World Championships, as a result of *The Equalizer*®, a Tournament Director or the APA Handicap Review Committee.

## 12. Teams Must Retain Four Original Members

In order for a team to maintain its qualification, the team's World Championship roster must include four original members. Original members are those who were on a team when it gained qualification to a World Qualifier.

- A team that qualifies in the Summer Session must retain four original members in the subsequent Fall and Spring Sessions. Should a Summer qualified team re-qualify in the Fall, all of the individuals on its Fall Session roster will be considered original members thereafter.
- A team that qualifies in the Fall Session must retain four original members in the subsequent Spring Session.
- Any player on the Spring Session roster, who was on the team when it first qualified, is considered original.
- An original player who does not meet the minimum matches played requirement prior to Playoffs will be ineligible, but will still be considered original.

## 13. Team Skill Level Limit

The 23-Rule will be enforced at all levels of the World Championships.

## 14. Time-Outs

Time-outs are limited to one per player, per rack, regardless of skill level. Remember:

- If any member of the team suggests a time-out to the shooter, the time-out will be charged.
- If the player requests a time-out, the coach may refuse it. Ineligible players cannot coach or participate in any group consensus.

## 15. Common Players At The World Level Of The Championships

A common player is defined as a player on more than one team. A team may have up to two players that are common with another team in the same format at the World Championships. A player may be common on up to two teams in each format at the World Championships. This means a player may qualify on up to two 8-Ball teams and two 9-Ball teams. A player who qualifies on more than two teams in any format must choose which teams they will stay on, prior to entering the World Championships.

**NOTE 1:** Players who are advancing to the World Championships on multiple teams should contact their League Operator for additional information about the common player guidelines.

**NOTE 2:** Matches will not be held up for players who are participating on multiple teams.

## **16. Identification Requirements**

All players must present photo identification in the form of a current state-issued ID from their State or Province of residence, a Military ID, or a passport at all Championship Tournaments. Players who do not have a valid photo ID must obtain one prior to participating in the event.

**NOTE:** A player who cannot provide the required form of photo ID will not be allowed to play without approval from the Tournament Director.

## **17. Travel Assistance Policy**

The Local League awards Travel Assistance to the team(s) advancing from the World Qualifier to the World Pool Championships. The Travel Assistance paid by the Local League is not prize money and should not be considered prize money.

Travel Assistance is awarded to offset some of the expenses incurred by the team in traveling to, and participating in, the World Pool Championships. The Travel Assistance is to be split equitably among the team members traveling to the Tournament. Proof of travel arrangements may be required by Local League Management before Travel Assistance is distributed.

Teams qualified for the World Pool Championships that do not intend to travel to and participate in the Tournament are not eligible to receive Travel Assistance; in this situation, a runner-up team will become eligible to compete in the World Pool Championships and receive Travel Assistance. In addition, if one or more players on a qualified team choose not to attend the World Pool Championships, those team members may not be eligible to receive Travel Assistance and/or other awards.

## 18. APA Is The Highest Authority

In order to preserve the fairness and integrity of its Championships, APA reserves the right to disqualify any player(s) and/or team(s) if:

- a. The certification packet submitted by the player/team appears to have been altered or contains irregularities that might give a player or team an unfair advantage.
- b. Any member of the team is participating at a skill level lower than their true playing ability.
- c. Any fraudulent circumstances of any nature are found to exist.
- d. A player or team's sportsmanship or conduct is deemed by APA to discredit the Tournament, the League or the sport.

The determination of whether a player is participating at a skill level below their true ability is necessarily subjective. APA is the sole judge of a player's ability and may make such a determination in its absolute judgment and discretion.

Disqualification will result in forfeiture of all titles, awards and prize money as well as a minimum two-year suspension from the League.

**APA is the highest authority concerning all Tournament rulings. Its decisions are final.**

# GLOSSARY

**BALL-IN-HAND:** (1) The advantage given to a player when their opponent scratches or otherwise fouls, wherein the player may place the cue ball anywhere on the table; (2) A defensive move to pass your turn at the table.

**BANK (Shot):** Driving an object ball to a rail in the course of making a shot.

**BREAK (Shot):** The first shot of a game.

**BRIDGE:** (1) Hand that holds and guides the cue shaft; (2) The type of hold; (3) A shaped plate mounted near or at the tip of a cue stick.

**BYE:** A placeholder in a schedule or Tournament for a missing team or participant. When there are an odd number of teams in a division or participants in a Tournament, there will be a bye. A team scheduled to play a bye does not play and no fees are due.

**CAROM:** The glancing of one ball off another.

**CUE BALL:** The white ball that a player strikes first when executing a shot.

**DEFENSIVE SHOTS:** A shot where there is no intent on the part of the shooter to pocket a ball of their category (8-Ball), or pocket any ball after contacting the lowest numbered ball on the table (9-Ball).

**DOUBLE-HIT:** An illegal shot involving the tip of the cue stick coming into contact with the cue ball twice during the execution of a single shot. This foul may occur through double clutching the cue ball, or in situations where the cue ball is nearly frozen to the object ball or rail. In the latter case, the double-hit often occurs due to the difficulty in moving the stick away from the shot quickly enough to avoid the cue ball rebounding back into the stick. In general, the shooter can lessen the likelihood of committing this type of foul by hitting the cue ball into the object ball or rail at an angle, or by elevating the butt of the cue about 30 degrees. This does not guarantee that a foul will be avoided; however, it cuts down the length of the follow through, which is the principal cause of a double-hit.

**DRAW:** A method of stroking the cue ball that causes it to spin backwards after contact with an object ball.

**ENGLISH:** A method of stroking the cue ball that causes any type of spin.

**ESTABLISHED SKILL LEVEL:** A handicap that is based on 10 match scores in a given format.

**FOLLOW:** A method of stroking the cue ball that causes it to follow the object ball in the same direction.

**FOLLOW THROUGH:** The motion of the cue stick carrying through the area previously occupied by the cue ball.

**FOOT RAIL:** (1) The short rail closest to the area where the balls are dispensed; (2) The short rail closest to where the balls are racked; (3) The rail opposite from the end used by the players to break (see Table Diagram).

**FOOT SPOT:** A spot placed in the exact center of an imaginary line drawn across the pool table between the second diamonds from the foot rail (see Table Diagram).

**FOUL:** An illegal shot resulting in loss of turn at the table and ball-in-hand for the opponent.

**FROZEN BALL:** A ball touching another ball or a rail. If it is touching another ball, it is frozen on that ball; if it is touching a rail, it is frozen on the rail.

**HEAD RAIL:** The rail closest to the end used by the players to break (see Table Diagram).

**HEAD STRING:** The imaginary line drawn across the pool table between the second diamonds from the head rail (see Table Diagram).

**HILL-HILL MATCH:** The point in match play where both players need only one more game to win.

**INNING:** A completed cycle during which both players had one turn at the table.

**JAW OF THE POCKET:** (1) The part of the cushion that is cut at an angle to form the opening from the bed of the table into the pocket; (2) Area of the playing surface between an end rail and a side rail (see Table Diagram). A ball is considered in the jaw of the pocket if any portion crosses the imaginary line as shown in the Table Diagram.

**JUMP SHOT:** The striking of the cue ball with the cue tip, in a downward fashion, for the purpose of elevating or jumping the cue ball over an impeding object ball to achieve a legal hit.

**KICK SHOT:** A shot that drives the cue ball to a rail before contacting the object ball.

**LAG:** Method used to determine who breaks in the first game.

**MASSÉ (Shot):** A shot in which a player curves the cue ball around another ball in order to strike an intended ball. A massé is accomplished by raising the butt end of the cue and using either right or left english. The more the cue is raised, the more the cue ball will curve. Extreme massé shots, improperly executed, can cause damage to pool tables and billiard equipment.

**MISCUE:** A shot in which the cue's tip does not hit the cue ball squarely and glances off without driving the cue ball on its desired course.

**OBJECT BALL:** Any ball besides the cue ball.

**ON THE HILL:** Term used to indicate a player is one game away from winning their match.

**OPEN TABLE:** Term used to describe the status of an 8-Ball game, after the break shot, in which neither player has assumed a category of object balls. The player may shoot any ball, except the 8-ball, when the table is open without fouling assuming all other aspects of a legal shot occur.

**ORIGINAL MEMBERS:** A term that refers to those members who were on a team when it gained qualification to a World Qualifier.

**PLAYING SURFACE:** The bed of the table.

**PUSH-OUT:** A shot in 9-ball that requires announcing the intent to push-out, and then shooting the cue ball to a new position. The shooter doesn't need to satisfy the legal shot rule (driving a ball to a rail after a legal hit). Push-outs can only be used immediately after the break, by the breaker if they pocketed a ball on the break, or by the incoming player if no balls were pocketed on the break. Any ball pocketed on a push-out does not count and will be spotted. The shooter's opponent then has the option to shoot from the new position or tell the shooter to take the shot. Normal game rules apply from that point on. Push-outs are allowed in the Masters format and at the U.S. Amateur Championship; however, push-outs are not allowed in any handicapped competition as they give the more highly skilled player too great of an advantage.



**PUSH SHOT:** A shot in which the cue ball is frozen to the object ball, and the shooter keeps the tip of the cue on the cue ball while pushing through the shot. Push shots are not fouls, but players who repeatedly guide the cue ball with force through object balls that are frozen to the cue ball, using a level cue and long follow through, may be subject to a sportsmanship penalty. In general, you can lessen the chance of being accused of shooting a push shot by hitting the cue ball into the object ball at an angle, or by elevating the butt of your cue about 30 degrees.

**REGULAR SHOOTING CUE:** Any standard pool cue designed to shoot the majority of shots in a game of pool. These cues may be used to perform jump shots, massé shots, and break shots in all APA League play.

**SAFETY:** A defensive action taken when a player has no makeable or high percentage shot or chooses to leave their opponent in a difficult situation. It is a legal shot and part of the game of pool. A safety must still conform to the rules requiring the shooter to contact the correct ball first and striking a rail afterwards. If the correct ball is accidentally pocketed while playing a safety, the shooter must continue to shoot. Players with integrity call their safeties. Safeties must be marked as Defensive Shots on the scoresheet.

**SANDBAGGING:** The unethical practice of deliberately playing below your ability in order to manipulate your handicap.

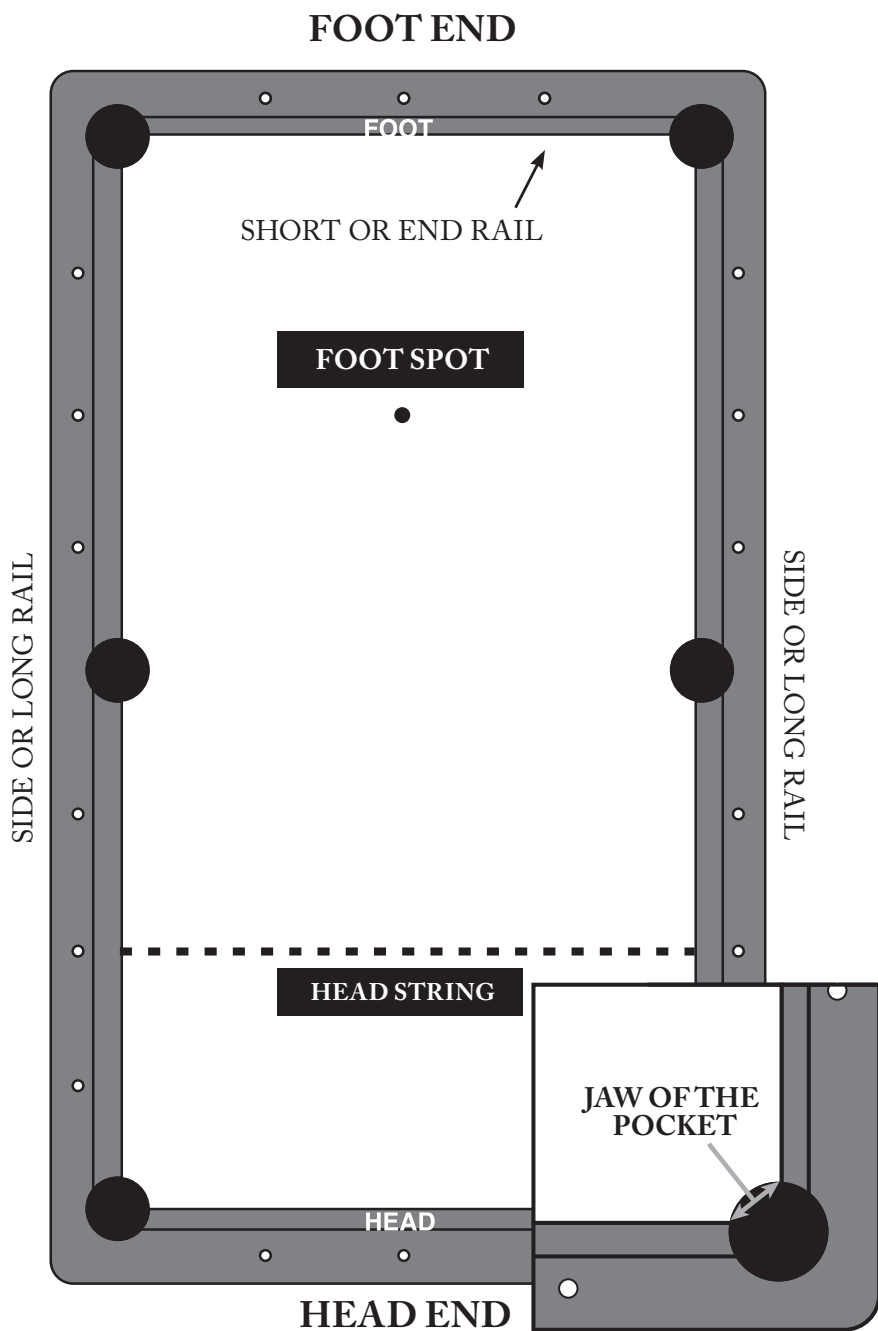
**SCRATCH:** (1) The pocketing of the cue ball; (2) Driving the cue ball off the playing surface and onto the floor.

**SESSION:** Refers to a season in which League play takes place. There are three sessions in each League Year: Summer, Fall and Spring.

**SOFT BREAK:** Sometimes referred to as a safe break. A break shot that is executed at a level significantly less than the breaker's full strength. Also known as "breaking safe," breaking soft is not allowed in APA matches.

**SPECIALTY CUES:** Cues specially designed to perform specific shots. These include, but are not limited to, jump cues, break cues, jump-break cues (combinations of jump cues and break cues) and "shorties".

**TWO-WAY SHOT:** An attempt to pocket a ball and leave one's opponent with a difficult shot if the attempt fails.



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