

# Tournament Rules

- 1. **Practice Time** – Practice is not allowed on any tournament table, except during specified periods, and only with the permission of the League Operator or Tournament Director. You are encouraged to practice on all tables designated for that purpose, and are asked to share the practice tables with any other contestants who wish to use them. Generally speaking, a 10 or 15 minute time limit is advised for any one or two individuals using the practice table if other contestants are waiting. Any table designated as a practice table during the event should be reserved for those contestants who have not yet been eliminated from the tournament. Practice is not allowed on tournament tables during play, even though a table may not be in use during short periods.
- 2. **Forfeit time** – Forfeits will be determined 15 minutes after a match has been called. If a team has registered for the tournament, every effort will be made to locate the team before a forfeit is declared. The League Operator or Tournament Director determines when a match is officially forfeited.
- 3. **Sudden Death Format** – When the *Sudden Death* format is in effect, all other League rules apply to player selection. We ask all players to help keep to the schedule by being ready to play when their match is called, and by observing the *Match Time Guidelines*.

**8-Ball Sudden Death** – This format is implemented 3 hours and 45 minutes into an 8-Ball match. Each team match must be in the 5<sup>th</sup> individual match by the *3-hour-and-45-minute* mark, or all subsequent matches become a one game race.

**9-Ball Sudden Death** – This format is implemented 3 hours into a 9-Ball match. Each team match must be in the 5<sup>th</sup> individual match by the *3-hour* mark, or all subsequent matches will consist of all points earned being doubled. Each object ball pocketed will count as 2 points and the 9-Ball will count as 4 points.

**\* Your League Operator or Tournament Director may choose to split matches rather than use the Sudden Death format.**

- 4. **Declaring Players** – Once both teams in a match have declared a player, the players cannot be changed unless the 23/19 Rule is in jeopardy.
- 5. **Coaching** – A player may be coached only once per game. If a coach suggests a time-out to the player, the time-out must be taken. However, if a player asks for a time-out, the coach can refuse to take it and no time-out will be charged. Mark all coaches (time-outs) with a “T” on your scoresheet. Coaches are allowed to place the cue ball (during a coaching time-out) in a ball-in-hand situation. All rules regarding fouling the cue ball apply to the coach when placing the cue ball for a player.

**\*Common players and ineligible players are not allowed to participate as a coach.**

- 6. **Checking Player Identification** – A current picture I.D. is required! All tournament participants must present a current, certified, positive picture I.D. in the form of a state I.D. from their state of residence, a military I.D., or a passport, prior to competing in the event. Your I.D. must be available for review prior to competing in each match. If you do not have a proper picture I.D., you will not be allowed to play. In all Higher Level Tournament events it would be considered standard procedure for good sportsmanship if, at the beginning of each match, contestants provided proper identification to their opponents before shaking hands. Each player in a match at a Higher Level Tournament event should be satisfied with the identity of their opponent in the match. If a player does not have their I.D. at that time, the team will forfeit that individual match and the use of that player for the remainder of the match. The opponent remains eligible to play in a later match; however, the team must show it can stay within the 23-Rule by using a remaining player on the roster. If a player(s) neglects to ask an opponent for proper identification prior to the lag at the beginning of their match, and the identity of the opponent becomes questionable after a game is in progress, the only option is to finish the current game, then ask for a Tournament Official to verify the opponent’s identification before continuing the match. The Tournament Director is the only person who can make a judgment on any form of I.D. in question and will decide what course of action will be taken concerning the identity of the player in question.
- 7. **Impersonating a Player** – The entire team of a player who enters or participates under fraudulent circumstances will be disqualified.
- 8. **Scorekeeping** – Scoresheets with *innings* recorded and *defensive shots* marked must be kept by a member of both teams or by an official scorekeeper. If it is determined a team is not marking defensive shots, then the League Operator or Tournament Director may arbitrarily raise some or all skill levels of players on that team. Scoresheets must be signed and turned in to the Control Table to receive credit for match wins. Refusal to sign a scoresheet does not affect any match protest. It is the responsibility of the winning team to make sure the Control Table receives proper scoresheets.

**8-Ball Only** – Mark **Early 8’s (E8), 8-Ball Scratches (8S), 8-on-the-Breaks (8OB), and Break and Runs (BR)** on your scoresheets. Patches for **8-on-the-Break** and **Break and Runs** will be awarded. Patches must be claimed by the Team Captain at the Control Table when the scoresheets are turned in for processing.

**9-Ball Only** – When one team reaches 51 points, *the match is over*. Do not finish that individual match; simply mark on the scoresheet **Not Finished (NF)**. Make sure you mark all balls pocketed, dead balls, **Break-and-Runs (BR)** and **9-on-the-Snap (9OS)**. Patches for **9-on-the-Snap** and **Break and Runs** may be awarded. Patches must be claimed by the Team Captain at the Control Table when the scoresheets are turned in for processing.

**\*Any team caught fraudulently keeping score – adding innings, altering scoresheets in any way, etc. – will be subject to disqualification.**

- 9. **Dress Code** – Proper attire must be worn at all times in and around the tournament site. The League Operator or

Tournament Director shall determine what is proper attire, and is responsible for requiring the change of improper attire on the part of any contestant. Any change of improper attire is not just cause for delay in the progress of a team match. The dress code will be enforced.

- 10. **No Earphones** – It is not permissible to wear earphones of any type during Tournament play. This includes ear buds, headphones, headsets, Bluetooth devices, etc.
- 11. **Cell Phone Use** - During the shooter’s turn at the table, cell phone use is prohibited for that player.
- 12. **No Smoking** – Smoking is not permitted at the pool table; however, ashtrays may be provided on each team/player table pending location acceptance.
- 13. **Game Rules** – APA game rules apply. Any and all Local Bylaw(s) or interpretation(s) which are not in full accord with the National Rules established by the APA do not apply to your participation in the National event. It is your responsibility to know what is a National Rule (or standard), and what is a Local Bylaw (or standard). The game rules used during your event are covered in the Official Team Manual. You should be familiar with these rules.
- 14. **Skill Levels** – The APA is the sole judge of a player’s ability, and may at any time raise a player’s skill level if the APA believes that he/she is not playing up to his/her true ability. It is especially important the skill level at which you participate in this event reflects your true ability according to National Rules and standards. **This is your responsibility.** You are advised by the APA to make certain you and your teammates fully understand and conscientiously follow all the National rules and standards. If you determine you or one of your teammates skill level is not accurate, then you must notify your League Operator or Tournament Director prior to entering and playing in the event. Doing so will not necessarily prevent your disqualification; it will, however, help in determining your eligibility status.
- 15. **Fouls** – Fouls may be called by the player or by his/her coach. It should be kept in mind, since everybody on the team may communicate with the coach, that in effect, anyone on the team may call a foul, but only a call made by the coach or the player makes it official. Before taking ball-in-hand, each player is advised to make certain they actually have ball-in-hand. If you do not confirm ball-in-hand with your opponent, or with tournament officials, and there is a difference of opinion, then you subject yourself to the potential costly mistake of fouling the cue ball unknowingly.
- 16. **Cue Ball Fouls** – The cue ball is always alive. Do not touch the cue ball while it is still rolling. Doing so may result in a foul.
- 17. **Close Shots** – If a shot looks like it may result in a “bad hit,” stop the game and get a tournament official to make the call. Either player may stop the game to ask for a call. The decision of the tournament official is final. If a shot is close and a tournament official is not called, the ruling will have a tendency to be in the shooter’s favor.
- 18. **Mark the 8-Ball (8-Ball only)** – The pocket the 8-Ball is intended to enter must be marked with a coaster, pocket marker,

or any other reasonable marker. To avoid confusion, marking the pocket with chalk is not recommended. If a player pockets the 8-Ball without marking the intended pocket, and the opponent calls loss of game, it will result in a loss of game. Both players may use the same marker. Only one marker should be on the table. However, if more than one marker is on the table, as long as you clearly mark the pocket where you intend to pocket the 8-Ball you have properly marked the pocket. If the marker is already at the intended pocket from a previous attempt or game, it is not necessary for the shooter to touch it, pick it up, or reposition it. **Anyone** may remind a player to place the marker and it will not be considered coaching or a foul.

- 19. **The 23-Rule** – The 23-Rule will be enforced. No team may play five players whose combined skill levels exceed 23. In addition, a team must show it could have fielded a legal team (meaning it could have fielded 5 players that did not exceed 23) if the match had gone the entire 5 individual matches. If the total skill levels of the lowest five players listed on your roster is equal to or less than 23, then your team can meet the 23-Rule. This means a team may not lead off with three players whose skill levels add up to 19 unless there are two 2’s listed on the roster. A team may not try to win with its first three players and disregard the 23-Rule. All the above applies to the Ladies Division except that it concerns the 19-Rule instead of the 23-Rule.

***What happens is a team is unable to comply with the 23 rule?*** If the total skill levels of the lowest five players listed on the roster exceed 23, the team will have to play four players whose skill levels do not exceed 19 in the Open Division (16 in the Ladies Division) and forfeit the fifth match. If the skill levels of the lowest four players on the roster exceed 19, then they can play three players to 15 (13 in the Ladies Division) and forfeit the fourth and fifth matches.

- 20. **Forfeiting Matches** – Individual matches may be forfeited at any time during a team match. If an individual match is forfeited **after** the rack has been broken, the skill level of both players in the match will count towards the 23-Rule (19-Rule in the Ladies Division). If an individual match is forfeited **before** the rack has been broken, the player on the team receiving the forfeit remains eligible to play again as the forfeit does not count as a match played. Both teams must be able to show at the end of the team match they could have fielded a legal team. (Meaning they could have fielded five players that did not exceed 23 (19 in the Ladies Division) had all five individual matches been played.) For example, if the opposing team puts up a SL7, your team cannot forfeit using an unavailable player so your opponent can’t play their SL7. The opposing team would regain the use of their SL7 as long as they can show that they can still remain within the 23-Rule had all five individual matches been played.
- 21. **Ineligible Players** – Ineligible players are those players who, for whatever reason, are not eligible to play in any match during this tournament. All ineligible players will be removed from the Higher Level Tournament roster and will not count for 23-Rule purposes in the 8-Ball and 9-Ball Open Divisions or 19-Rule purposes in the 8-Ball Ladies Division.

**\*Ineligible players are not allowed to participate as a coach.**

- 22. **Senior Skill Level Players (9-Ball only)** – Only two senior skill level players may play in any given team match. Senior skill

- level players are those players who have a skill level of 6, 7, 8, or 9.
23. **Common Players at the National Level** - 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 National Level of the Team Championships. A player may be common on up to two teams in each format at the National level of the Team Championships. A player may qualify on up to two 8-Ball Open Division teams, Two 9-Ball Open Division teams and two 8-Ball Ladies Division teams (ladies only, of course). If you qualify on more than two teams in any format, you must choose which team rosters you will stay on prior to entering the National Level of the Championships. Common players are not allowed to participate as a coach.
- \*Matches will not be held up for players who are participating on multiple teams.**
24. **Tie Breakers:**  
**8-Ball only** – *What happens if a team match ends 2-2?* If it is time for the fifth match and neither team has an eligible player present to play, the match is decided by the performance of the two teams in the first three matches. The team that won two out of the first three matches is determined the winner and advances to the next round of the tournament.
- 9-Ball only** – *What happens if a team match ends 50-50?* Championship matches will be scored the same as weekly play, except individual forfeits will be worth 20 points (instead of 15). The first team to reach 51 points is the winner. In case of a tie at the end of the match (50-50 match points), the tie would be broken by the number of individual matches won by each team.
25. **Team Disqualification Procedure** – If Higher Level Tournament play is to be truly meaningful and rewarding, then those who play below their true ability must be penalized.
- Complaints of unsportsmanlike conduct, or any evidence of a player playing at a skill level below his/her true ability, should be reported immediately to your League Operator or Tournament Director.
- In order to conduct a fair and equal tournament for all APA players, APA must ensure that all participants are playing at skill levels that are not below their true ability. Handicap manipulation compromises the fairness and integrity of tournament play and cannot be tolerated. Accordingly, the APA may disqualify any player or team if, in APA's sole judgment and absolute discretion, one or more of its players are deemed by the APA to be playing at a skill level below their true ability. The determination of whether a player is playing at a skill level below his or her true ability is necessarily subjective; the APA is the sole judge of a player's ability and may make such a determination in its absolute judgment and discretion.
- The League Operator or Tournament Director will review the performance of each team after every round of play and make skill level adjustments as necessary. They will also investigate complaints and review elevated skill levels to determine the eligibility status of the team(s) involved. Teams may be disqualified at any time during or after tournament play if the APA concludes the team members have, without justification, played below their true ability. It is up to the disqualified team

- to provide an explanation or justification for elevated skill levels.
- The APA is the sole judge of a players ability and may, at any time, raise a player's skill level if the APA believes he/she is not playing up to his/her true ability.
26. **Protests** – The Team Captain must make all protests to the League Operator or Tournament Director in a sportsmanlike manner. There is a \$50.00 filing fee for any protest, which is refundable if the team filing wins the protest. Any team disrupting the tournament, causing a scene, or causing other problems at or around the tournament site will lose the right to protest. The League Operator or Tournament Director will resolve all issues on the spot. The APA is the highest authority. Any rulings made by the APA are final.
27. **Rules of Conduct** – Read the ***Rules of Conduct***. Make sure you understand the Penalty Level System. It is designed to stop a problem while it is still a small problem. The ***Rules of Conduct*** may be used by the League Operator or Tournament Director or designated tournament official at any Higher Level Tournament event for **any** form of misconduct.
28. **Warnings** – If a warning is given in an individual match, that warning will follow the team throughout the remainder of the event. For example, if a player is warned for sharking their opponent, and in a subsequent match a player from that same team is warned for sharking their opponent, the result will be ball-in-hand for the opponent. Such warnings will be noted by a tournament official on the scoresheets.
29. **Sportsmanship** – The primary objective of the League has always been to provide players of all abilities with the fun and enjoyment of friendly competition. Naturally, each player arrives hoping to do well, and all players will be doing their best to win. Each player is expected to accept defeat in a sportsmanlike manner.
- Two common violations of good sportsmanship are conceding an unfinished game and undoing a cue during play. Both forms of conduct are frowned upon by professionals, and should be eliminated from amateur play. All players are asked to allow opponents to finish the game before racking the balls or undoing cues. No penalty will be assessed unless, in the opinion of the League Operator or Tournament Director, a repeated violation of this conduct rule occurs.
- Another area of good sportsmanship concerns fouls. A foul is a foul and should be observed as such. Occasionally, a player feels that a foul is a foul only if they get caught. Generally speaking, a professional player will call a foul on themselves. Likewise, good sportsmanship in the amateur ranks requires a player to admit a mistake, and live with the consequences. However, it is technically each player's responsibility to protect themselves. Pay attention to your game.
30. **Equipment Regulations** – In general, any piece of equipment designed specifically for pocket billiards, with the exception of jump cues and laser devices, is acceptable in the APA Tournament play. Special equipment, such as bridges and cue extenders are legal. You may change cues during a game. Jump shots are legal, when executed properly, but such shots must be attempted with a regular shooting cue\*. Players are not allowed

- to break their cue sticks down and use just the shaft to attempt jump shots. Specialty cues, such as break cues\*\* and jump cues, may not be used to perform jump shots\*\*\*.
- \*Any standard pool cue used to shoot the majority of shots in a match.  
\*\*Any cue specifically designed for breaking. This does not include regular shooting cues used for breaking.  
\*\*\*Any piece of equipment not covered by this rule and in question will be ruled upon by APA. Cues with moveable parts will generally **NOT** be allowed.
- Any Equipment bearing any message or image of a sexually explicit or political nature, or a message or image which may be offensive due to the use of profanity or by the virtue of its promotion of violence, alcoholism, or substance abuse shall be prohibited from use in all APA events. The Tournament Director shall be the enforcing authority of this regulation.
- The Tournament Director shall have the right to inspect a player's cue(s) at any time during a tournament without prior notice to the player, and if the cue(s) are found to be in violation of this regulation, the player shall immediately cease using the objectionable cue during tournament play, or face immediate disqualification and forfeiture of all prize money earned and/or entry fee paid.
31. **Disqualification** – APA has the absolute and final authority to make all rulings affecting participation in the APA Team Championship program including player ability (i.e. correction of skill levels) and disqualification. Disqualification from this event for any reason will mean forfeiture of all titles, awards, prize money, and minimum two year suspension from the League. Disqualification can occur prior to, during, or after the event.

# Official Rules of the Local Team Championships

