

## A Message To All Members of TAP, LLC

We at TAP, LLC, also referred to as TAP, would like to take this opportunity to welcome you to the new generation of league play. Our goal is to promote the sport of billiards in a forum that fosters fellowship, good sportsmanship and team spirit. Your affiliation with TAP is very important to us – important because it lets us know that you share the same love for the sport of billiards as we do. We hope that you enjoy your league play, and we are certain that you'll witness your skills developing as you participate in the fastest growing team sport of the new millennium.

TAP has put a good deal of effort into developing the programs offered to our members. Our research has noted that there are many different ways to play 10-Ball, and these vary from establishment to establishment throughout the world. We've structured our rules to be as fair as we possibly can to all of our players, regardless of where they are competing. Please remember that there will be circumstances that arise that are not specifically covered in the rules. We ask you to use this booklet as a guide, and let your common sense and sportsmanship do the rest. Also remember that there are all levels of players and teams in TAP. Some like to play for fun, and others enjoy the thrill of competition. Please remember that we all have the right to play and participate. Whatever a person's reason for playing, respect them and encourage others to do their best.

TAP, and its subsidiary, POOL Net, are nationally and internationally recognized league and tournament management systems. The support of our players and our products have elevated us to where we are today, and your continued support will put us in the forefront of the industry we've all grown to love. We hope to see all of you at one of our major events, and perhaps some-day, we'll be handing you a check for the winner's share. Until then, kick back and enjoy your league experiences and remember...

*“After all the rest,  
Why not the best?”*

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**Many of our members have been playing league pool for years; however, some find themselves participating in organized league play for the first time. If this is the case, a few simple rules will make your league experience, as well as those of your teammates, as enjoyable as possible.**

**The rules are as follows:**

1. Before being allowed to compete in a TAP event or league, you must be a bona fide member in good standing with TAP and willing to play under our General Rules listed in this book. For example, filling out a complete membership application, paying your annual membership dues, league fees and tournament fees, staying active for any events, sessions or tournaments you or your team may have entered or qualified for. Remember the time to stop playing is when you have completed your obligations for the session and events for that session.
2. When you sign up to play in a league, you make a commitment to your league and teammates to play the entire league session. League pool is a team effort and only through this commitment can we foster the type of fellowship and sportsmanship that we are looking to develop through active participation in TAP. Also try your best to stay committed to the team you started with. Changing teams is sometimes needed but should be done early in the session. Decisions regarding the ability of a player to switch from one team to another will be made at the discretion of the League Director in conjunction with their League Owner and corporate office. Abuse of this privilege will not be tolerated.
3. You should make it a point to be on time to play your league matches. It is a matter of common courtesy not to keep your opponents waiting to start league play. If you do not start on time, your match could be forfeited. You can start your league with one player from your team present. League play can start no later than fifteen (15) minutes from start time. Matches are to start no later than five (5) minutes after the last match is completed.
4. Always be courteous and polite to your opponents and fellow players. While we foster a competitive environment, we don't want this to take precedence over the rights that everyone has to enjoy themselves.
5. Abusive behavior and foul language will not be tolerated, and may be cause for suspension or revocation of your TAP membership. Suspended players cannot participate in any TAP sponsored events. Players whose membership has been revoked can never participate in TAP sponsored events.

6. TAP does not condone gambling during league play.
7. Every member has an obligation to pay all league fees. Teams are responsible for their own weekly dues and paying in a timely manner. You should remember that if you do not pay, the people who suffer are your fellow team members, as your shortages may result in your team being ineligible for post-session league play or other TAP sponsored events. Also your shortages could be posted on the weekly league rosters and web site for other league teams to view. A team or player that is current in all fees may refuse to play any team or member not current in all fees. Every area is different, please talk to your League Owner or consult your local by-laws on this.
8. There is an old adage that goes “It’s not whether you win or lose, but how you play the game.” That aptly sums up our approach to league play. While we consider all of our members to be “winners,” for every match that is played there has to be an official “loser.” We expect “winners” to conduct themselves like champions, and our “losers” to conduct themselves like ladies and gentlemen.
9. If there is something that you don’t understand about the way your league is being run, we encourage you to approach your League Owner or call the corporate office ([www.tapleague.com](http://www.tapleague.com)) with questions. If necessary, your question will be referred to TAP’s corporate office. All inquiries will be answered because we firmly believe that a member, who understands why something is done in a particular fashion, is one who will be more apt to continue participating in TAP activities.
10. Always respect the house rules of the establishment in which you are playing.
11. TAP’s corporate office has the right to revoke your membership at any time.
12. TAP recognizes that not all rules can be covered in a rule book. Situations arise that require interpretation on the spot. The League Director has the right to interpret the rules during league and make decisions on situations. Sometimes your League Director may not be present. If this is the case take good sportsmanship into account.
13. Each TAP territory should provide members with structured levels of authority. Recommendation for the structure is: The League Owner (Licensee) is the purchaser of the territory and the top authority in the territory, a League Operator has jurisdiction over a specific area within the territory, and a League Director oversees a specific division. Check with your League Owner for variations of this structure.

Some rules written hereinafter may be subject to change. In addition, TAP sanctioned event rules may vary for a variety of reasons. If you are fortunate enough to make it to a TAP event, be sure to have your League Owner go over those differences so you will be prepared when you come to play.

**Note:** In order to compete in any TAP nationally sanctioned event, you must have a minimum of 6 matches played during the last 16 weeks before the tournament cut-off date and scored in the National data base to participate. You must also be an active “playing” member during the session in which the event is being held.

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How to get your weekly league stats: Go to [www.poolnetstatistics.com](http://www.poolnetstatistics.com), or, [www.tapleague.com](http://www.tapleague.com) (under the Pool Net logo, Team Standings), select Organization (which is your local league name) and Division (in which you participate).

For National and other TAP Corporate events, select Organization (National Event Name & Year) and Division (Team or Singles Event Name), to verify your registration has been received.

Communication is key visit [www.tapleague.com](http://www.tapleague.com) and sign up for our Message Board.

## **General Guidelines For Play**

### **10-Ball Rules**

#### **Object of the Game**

10-Ball is a call-shot game played with a cue-ball and 10 object balls numbered 1 thru 10. You shoot the balls in ascending numerical order. The 10-ball is the game winning ball. The object of the game is to pocket the 10-ball.

#### **Beginning Play**

#### **Choosing Your First Player**

Games commence with the two Team Captains tossing a coin to determine who will be the first to announce a player. The winner of the coin toss has the option to either choose a player from his or her team, or have the opposing Team Captain or player choose a player from their team to start the first game of the match. After this has been determined, player selections will be alternated for the following matches until all league matches are completed.

A team will forfeit the 1<sup>st</sup> match if they are not ready to play within 15 minutes of their scheduled start time. Thereafter, a team will forfeit a match every 5 minutes if they are not ready to play.

A player can represent their team in active play once per night and represent that specific division on only one team per night. A player may only play on one table at a time. Multiple nights and division play are accepted and encouraged.

#### **Lagging For the Break**

Once two players have been selected, they must simultaneously “lag” for the break. The “lag shot” is executed by striking an object ball from behind the head string to the foot rail and attempting to have it come to rest as close to the head rail as possible. The winner of the “lag” is the player whose ball stops closest to the head rail. The “lag” is considered a skill shot and should never be aborted in favor of a coin toss. The winner of the “lag” has the option of either breaking or awarding his/her opponent the break. In subsequent games, the winner of the previous game breaks. In cases where the cue ball is of different weight or size from the other balls, it should not be used for the “lag.” If your lagging ball is pocketed or contacts a side rail you lose the lag. If the two lagging balls make contact players must re-lag.

#### **Racking the Balls**

Balls are racked in a triangle with the 1-ball positioned at the apex of the rack, the 10-ball positioned in the middle of the rack, and the other balls placed in a random order. The 1-ball should be on the foot-spot.

## **The Break Shot**

The player entitled to the break has cue ball-in-hand 100% behind the head string. The breaking player must first drive the cue ball directly into the rack of balls, striking the 1- ball, and causing at least four (4) balls, (the cue ball can be one of the four balls) to hit a rail. Pocketing any ball, except the cue ball constitutes a legal break. If this task has not been accomplished, the opposing player is entitled to ask for a new rack and may elect to break. This is at the non-breaking player's discretion. An attempt to break that results in the cue ball crossing the head string, but not hitting the rack, is a foul. In this case, the opposing player has the option to take the break or allow the breaking player another attempt at the break.

If any balls, other than the 10-Ball, are driven off the table during the break shot, those balls stay down and it is a ball in hand for the incoming player. If the cue ball is pocketed, or driven off the table during the break shot, the incoming player has cue ball-in-hand anywhere on the table. All object balls that are pocketed "remain down." If the 10-ball is driven off the table, it is spotted with the incoming player have cue ball -in -hand (anywhere on the table).

(NOTE: For scoring, the breaker gets the number of balls pocketed added to his or her score under the "Made on Break" (MOB) column.). If a player pockets the 10-Ball during a legal break the ball is spotted, and the player continues to shoot. If the breaking player pockets the 10-Ball and scratches the 10-ball is spotted and the incoming player has cue ball-in-hand anywhere on the table.. If a player pockets the 10-Ball and drives an object ball off the table, the player has fouled. The 10-ball is spotted and the incoming has cue ball-in-hand anywhere on the table.

## **"Push out" After a Legal Break**

The "push out", also known as "roll out", is allowed one time only on the shot immediately following the break. The player executing this shot must clearly announce their decision to their opponent before shooting or it is treated as a normal shot. Push Outs are recorded as a Defensive shot. To execute this shot you may shoot the cue ball anywhere on the table. The cue ball is not required to contact a rail nor is the shooter required to contact the lowest numbered ball on the table. Any balls pocketed on a push out stay down and count as a Dead Ball on your score sheet, with the exception of the 10-ball, which is spotted. Spotted balls are not counted as completions in this case. Following the push out the opponent has the option to shoot or pass the shot back to the player who executed the push out. (NOTE: Scratching on a push out is a foul). When the push is given back to the player that performed it, it is considered a Defensive shot on the score sheet.

## **Continuing Play**

After a legal break or legal push out, the player who has command of the table continues to shoot until they miss, foul or win the game. This is continued until a winner is determined.

### **Skill Shots/Good Hits**

The shooter must contact the lowest numbered ball on the table first and either: 1) pocket the called ball in the called pocket, or, 2) have any ball contact a rail.

If the player pockets the called ball (lowest numbered) in a pocket other than the called pocket, that ball stays down and the opponent has the option to play the table as is, or, have the shooter shoot again. If the player pockets the called ball (other than the lowest numbered) in a pocket other than the called pocket, that ball stays down (except the 10-ball which is spotted) and play passes to the opponent with the cue ball where it stopped. Anytime the 10-Ball is pocketed out of turn it is spotted.

If a player pockets the called ball in the called pocket and also pockets any other balls, other than the 10-Ball or cue ball, the additional balls stay down and the player continues.

A player successfully pocketing the called ball in the called pocket, without committing a foul, is considered to have completed their shot and continues shooting no matter how the ball arrives in the pocket. This means that the pocketed ball can “kiss” every ball on the table or hit every rail and if it still goes in the called pocket it is a good shot.

### **Jumping/Masse/Switching Cues:**

During a match jump cues and switching of cues are permitted. At anytime you may switch cues or use a jump cue without notifying your opponent. If a shooting player intends on switching shafts during the match, he/she must notify the opponent of their intentions (see concessions). Jumping and Masse are allowed in TAP; however, you must respect the host location rules. Scooping the cue ball is not a legal shot. Jump shots must be performed by hitting the cue ball into the table's surface so that it rebounds from the cloth. Scooping under the cue ball to jump another ball is a ball-in-hand foul. Accidentally scooping a ball while attempting a regular shot is not a foul. **Using a shaft only is not allowed.**

## “Bank” Shots

Since this is a call ball and call pocket game it is not necessary to call bank shots. If the called ball drops into the called pocket without any other foul situation occurring, it counts as a skill shot. It does not matter how many rails the object ball strikes, as long as it drops into the called pocket. This stands with all forms of bank or kick shots.

## Completing Multiple Balls In One Shot

If you call your ball and pocket and complete a skill shot, it is marked as a completed shot. When completing a skill shot, any other balls that drop into a pocket stay down and are marked as a dead ball on your score sheet. **You cannot call two balls at the same time.** You must declare one or the other. **Note:** anytime the 10-Ball goes in a pocket out of turn it is spotted.

## Shooting the 10-Ball

When shooting the 10-Ball, you must mark the pocket you are calling. As long as the 10-Ball goes in the marked pocket after a good hit, the player wins. If a foul is committed while the 10-ball is pocketed then the 10-ball is spotted and it is cue ball-in-hand for the incoming player.

If the 10-ball is the only ball on the table and shot into the wrong pocket, it will be spotted and the opponent has the option to play the table as is, or, have the shooter shoot again.

Players cannot call out “mark your pocket” to the shooter unless the 10-ball is the only ball on the table. If other balls are in play it will result in a ball in hand foul to the opponent.

**Any object can be used as a marker except a standard piece of chalk.**

## Combination Shots

Combination shots are legal during league play. You must strike the lowest numbered ball first to execute a skill shot. Any ball on the table can be used as part of the combination providing the cue ball the lowest numbered ball first.

## Defensive/Safety Shot

To play a defensive (safety) shot, you still must execute a legal shot by hitting the lowest numbered ball on the table first, and drive a ball to the rail. A player must call a defensive (or safety) shot when not attempting to pocket an object ball. The opposing player has the right to ask the scorekeeper to record that shot as a defensive shot. Players must call defense prior to the shot and mark it as a (def) defensive shot. When calling a defensive shot, if you pocket a ball, the ball stays down (except the 10 ball which is spotted) and the opponent has the option to play the table as is, or, have the shooter shoot again. **Note:** Some shots in 10 Ball are made simply to make contact with your object ball because the ball is hidden from a clear shot. In these cases, the shot is scored as a Miss. Scorekeepers should use good judgment when making this decision.

### **Ball Frozen to the Rail**

This occurs when an object ball is touching the rail and becomes part of the rail. The opponent must declare the ball frozen before the shot is executed. If the intended object ball is frozen the shooter must do one or all of the following: (1) have the cue ball touch a rail after contacting the intended ball; (2) drive the intended ball to another rail; or (3) drive any other ball to a rail after contacting the intended ball. Remember, the match belongs to the two players. Teammates and coaches can be charged a time out for any assistance.

### **Stalemated Game**

If both players agree they have reached a point in the game where progress towards completion cannot be made, they have the option of mutually declaring a stalemated game and should re-rack and replay the game. This occurs when neither player wants to attempt a shot. Please mark re-rack on the score sheets and count the balls left on the table as dead balls. The original breaking player of that game breaks again. If one of the two players wishes to continue play, the game must go on until a winner is determined.

### **Fouls:**

There is no "Three foul" rule in TAP 10-ball league. A player committing a foul must relinquish his/her turn at the table. If a skill shot is correctly executed when the foul occurs, the shooter is awarded the shot but is penalized by having to give his/her opponent cue ball-in-hand. The following are examples of commonly occurring fouls:

**Foot Foul** – During any shot, a shooter must have one foot on the floor prior to and during the contact of the cue ball or they have fouled and the incoming player has cue ball-in-hand anywhere on the table. (NOTE: This rule does not apply to players who are physically impaired).

**Bad Hit** – If the first ball contacted by the cue ball is not the lowest numbered ball on the table it is a bad hit and considered a foul.

**Scratch** – If a player pockets the cue ball or drives the cue ball off the table, it is a foul. If you scratch and you are shooting the 10-Ball, it is a cue ball-in-hand foul. If a player executes a skill shot and then scratches, the shot is considered complete and the ball stays down, but the opponent is awarded cue ball-in-hand.

**Failure to Drive a Ball to a Rail** – A player must either legally pocket a ball or drive a ball to a rail after making a good hit or they have fouled.

**Ball Off the Table** – Should a player drive the cue ball off the table, they have scratched and their opponent is awarded cue ball-in-hand. If a player is shooting the 10-Ball and the cue ball is driven off the table, the opponent has cue ball-in-hand. If a player drives the 10-ball off the table, it is spotted and the opponent has cue ball-in-hand. NOTE: (Two balls that are stuck in the jaws of the pocket have two outcomes: 1<sup>st</sup>, if the two balls are below the playing surface and/or not touching the felt they are considered pocketed; 2<sup>nd</sup>, if the two balls are on the felt and not below the playing surface, they are in play and not pocketed.)

**Placing the cue ball** - In a ball in hand situation the cue ball is alive at all times. If while placing the cue ball, the cue ball, or the hand holding the cue ball, touches another ball a foul has occurred. A cue ball can be adjusted with your hand, or any part of the cue stick, so long as the player is not attempting to stroke the cue ball.

**Push Shot** – If the cue ball is frozen to the object ball, pushing through the cue ball is a legal hit. If there is separation between the two balls equal to or less than the width of a piece of chalk, the shooter must keep from double hitting the cue ball. To make a legal hit the shooter must either 1) When shooting directly at the two balls elevate the back of the cue in an attempt to put draw on the cue ball, or 2) Shoot at an angle not directly in line with the two balls. As long as an honest attempt at either is made, no foul can be called. If the distance between the two balls is greater than the width of a standard size piece of billiard chalk, a double hit of the cue ball is a ball-in-hand foul. When confronted with this situation, it is strongly recommended that a third party or referee be called to watch the hit to avoid controversy. If a third party is not called, it is the shooting player's decision.

**“Split Hits”** – When a player contacts the lowest numbered ball on the table and another ball at the same time, this does not constitute a foul. If it is suspected that a player may play a shot that might result in a “split hit,” the non-shooting player should ask that a league official, referee or another player observe the shot. In this instance, it would be that individual's duty to watch, and if necessary, call the hit. In the absence of an observer, should a controversy over the hit arise, the call will go to the shooter.

**Accidental Movement of a Ball** – If a player moves the cue ball, in any way, prior to their shot it is a foul and results in ball-in-hand to the player's opponent; this does not apply in ball-in-hand situations when a player is placing the cue ball. However, should a player accidentally move, or pocket, any other ball(s) in preparing to shoot or in the execution of a shot, it is not a foul (NOTE: Should a player accidentally pocket the 10-ball, it is automatically replaced where it was.) The opposing player has the right to replace the ball(s) or leave them where they are. Should the shooter, by reflex action, attempt to replace the moved ball(s), this is not a foul, but the opposing player has the option of placing the ball(s) back to where they were originally resting or leaving them where they were moved to by the shooter. If a player touches any moving ball, moved as a result of the shot, or the moved ball is struck by another moving ball during the shot, it is a ball-in-hand foul for the opponent. If any moving ball strikes the shooter's cue, bridge stick or their person it is a ball-in-hand foul to the opponent. NOTE: (If, after missing a shot, a player swings their cue in disgust and hits any balls, it is automatic loss of game.)

### **Payment of League Fees**

All teams and individual players are responsible for the payment of league fees. Forfeited matches are no exception. The full amount agreed upon should be paid at the end of play. Any team or player(s) owing any fees can result in that team or player(s) having match points deducted from their standings at any time. This can also result in a player(s) losing the opportunity to participate in an event regardless of the team's qualification. This also includes annual memberships. There are no league fees due for teams that are on a bye week.

### **Membership Payment:**

All memberships must be paid before a NEW player shoots their first match. A player may not be added to a roster unless they submit a Membership Application and pay the \$20.00 annual membership fee (\$25.00 in Canada). Renewing members can look at the weekly stats and see their renewal date. All renewals must be paid in the beginning of the month they are due. Owners are responsible for player's dues once they shoot a match. A player is responsible for paying the \$20 renewal fee the moment they shoot one match in the month of their renewal date. Any points won by a player that is not within good membership standing may be reversed.

### **Coaching**

A player is allowed to receive coaching from a fellow teammate who has been designated as the coach prior to the start of each match. Only one coach may be designated for each player's match and may not be changed during that match unless approved by the opposing team. The player or team coach for each team is entitled to call two (2) "time-outs" per game, lasting no more than one-minute each. Once a time out has been called, both players can communicate with their coach during that time out. Players that are a two (2) level handicap, receive two (2) one (1) minute time outs and unlimited assistance with their coach however, the coach cannot approach the table except during an official time out. However the player must still

execute their shot within the 45 second shot clock or it will be deemed one of their time outs. If a time out is called or inferred by either the coach or player, a timeout must be taken and the player is still charged with the timeout. If no time outs are available to that player the first offense will be a verbal warning the second offense will be a ball-in-hand foul. The third offense will be a loss of game. The fourth is loss of match.

During a time-out, the coach may not disrupt any balls on the table or mark the playing area of the table. Doing so constitutes a foul and the opponent is entitled to cue ball-in-hand. In a ball in hand situation the coach may not place the cue ball, if he/she does the opponent may ask that the shooter pick up the cue ball and replace it. The coach may not use a cue stick or any other object other than their hand to line the shot up for their player. The coach must leave the table prior to the execution of the shot. The first offense for any of the above is a verbal warning. The second and subsequent is a ball in hand foul.

After the time-out, coaches must cease communication with their players, and the player must execute his or her shot in the prescribed 45 seconds. (NOTE: An outside player on the team can talk to the coach, who can then relay that information to the player during a present time-out within the time limit. If the (1) minute time limit is exceeded and called by the opposing team, the player can take an additional (1) minute at the cost of another time-out, if they have a time-out remaining. **Note:** The link to the player is through the coach. No other passages to that player are allowed. **Only the Player or Coach can ask the opposing team if they have any time outs remaining.**

If the coach disrupts the balls, moves the balls, or marks the table in any way, it is ball-in-hand to the player's opponent. If the coach touches the table it is not a foul. To avoid controversy, the coach should avoid touching the felt.

During National & major events, each player will receive only (1), one minute time out per game because of specific time restraints.

### **Interference and "Side-Line" Coaching**

Any person, who interferes with the course of the match by offering advice, distracting a player or otherwise disturbing play, can subject their player to a foul. In this instance, the match referee, if one is available, or opposing captain must warn the individual involved and that player's Team Captain/Coach. After the warning, any reoccurrence of the offensive behavior results in a ball in hand foul to your opponent. A second occurrence will result in loss of game for your teammate. A third violation will result in loss of match for your teammate.

Anyone on the team can announce to a player to mark their pocket for the 10-Ball. As a team player on the sideline, we encourage you to support your player. However, you are responsible to do so in a sportsmanlike manner.

### **Speaking Another Language:**

All conversations during match play involving players, teammates, coaches and spectators are requested to be in English. An exception to this rule can be made should both players competing in the match speak and understand the shared language AND both players must agree that it is acceptable. If one of the players does not agree, regardless if they speak and understand the second language then English shall be the only language spoken. Please consult your local by-laws for penalties of violating this rule. The reason for this rule is to avoid coaching controversy.

**NOTE:** While in regular team play your Owner may relax restrictions on conversation between players involved in a match with their teammates. However, when teams are involved in National events or other major tournaments, no conversation will be allowed between shooting players and other members of their team. Only the designated coach can communicate with the shooting player during an official time-out called by either team. Violations of this rule may result in ball-in-hand for the opposing player. It is our suggestion that all teams follow this rule at all times while participating in TAP league play.

### **Slow Play**

It is important for every player in the league to ensure that his or her league match progresses in a timely fashion. A 45-second shot rule exists and will be used as the benchmark for assessing slow play. If a player is taking a significantly long amount of time to execute a shot, the opposing player or coach has the right to ask a league official or the player's coach to administer a slow play warning. If, after being warned, the player continues to play slowly, the opponent will receive cue ball-in-hand. In all matters concerning slow play, the decision of the League Director or referee will be final.

**Note: Before confronting the opponent's coach, you must actually time the shooter in question with a stopwatch to determine that a violation is occurring. Real time and perceived time are very different.**

Most of our leagues are played at night and it is important for the matches to be completed in a timely fashion. All players should note that after a match has been completed, a team has five (5) minutes to field another player, or the match may be subject to forfeit). This also stands true when picking your player for the next match. Please do so in a timely manner. A player should be picked and ready to shoot no later than five (5) minutes after each match.

### **Shot Clock**

All sports have a time limit and billiards is no exception. In our leagues, there is a 45-second time limit to execute your shot. The time limit commences after your opponent's shot ends and all the balls come to rest. If a time-out commences in the middle of your decision-making process, after the coaching period has ended, a new 45 seconds will be in effect. **Note:** (The 45 second shot clock is a benchmark average. Some shots can take longer or shorter depending on the level of difficulty.)

## Time-Outs

A player with a handicap of 3-4-5-6-7 is entitled to two (2) time-outs per game. Each time-out is one (1) minute in duration. A player at a 2-handicap level has two (2) one (1) minute time outs and unlimited coaching within the 45-second time limit. NOTE: (See the section marked “Coaching” for additional information about local, major, and national play.)

## Protests and Disputes

In our league the match belongs to the two players at the table. With this comes the responsibility of paying attention to your match whether you or your opponent is on the table. You have the right to protest a situation. Just remember, a protest needs proof in order to be evaluated. If your protest cannot be substantiated with proof, you could lose your match point for a false protest. If you and your opponent are paying attention and sportsmanship/common sense is utilized, there will be no reason for protests or disputes.

## Fielding a Team – The “25 Rule”

### Team Total Handicap Rules/Criteria (The “25 Rule”)

To field a legitimate five (5) player team, the sum total of the shooting player’s handicaps may not exceed twenty-five (25). **A team can play their players in any order they choose as long as the “25 Rule” is not violated.**

### Violation of the “25 Rule”

If a Team Captain cannot field a legitimate five (5) player team according to the “25 Rule,” he or she must then field their team accordingly:

**Total handicap for four (4) player teams cannot exceed 21 (If your 5 lowest handicaps of players on your roster exceed 25 then you have to play 4 to 21.)**

**Total handicap for three (3) player teams cannot exceed 18 (If your 4 lowest handicaps of players on your roster exceed 21 then you have to play 3 to 18.)**

### Failure to Field a Legitimate Team

If a Team Captain cannot field a legitimate team in accordance with the criteria set forth above, they will forfeit ONLY those matches that are in violation of the rule. (NOTE: It is the well-rounded team that stays the strongest throughout the league session, so choose your players wisely.) Lower level players play a big part in allowing your higher level player(s) to remain active on your team.

### Adding and Dropping Players

No team should have more than eight (8) players on its roster. A team may add a player to its roster at any time during the league session as long as there are enough weeks remaining in the current session for that player to complete the six (6) matches required to make him/her a legitimate member of that team.

Playoffs, Byes and forfeited matches do not apply towards any player's required matches.

Teams competing in events they qualified for during the session are to use their team roster of players from that session. **There are no substitutions.** When choosing your team, make sure your teammates understand they are expected to complete the session and session events.

**Note:** Deadlines for adding and dropping players may vary in different areas. Be sure to consult your local by-laws for specific rules in your area.

### **The "Known Player" Rule**

A player that is brought into the league that has, or does not have a previous handicap or league experience may be assigned a handicap by the League Director or other league official if his or her skill level is known.

### **Professional Players**

Individuals who hold current membership in a men's or women's professional billiards association are not allowed to compete in TAP's handicapped league events. If an individual's primary source of income is from competing in pool or the individual attempts to derive their income from pool that person will also be considered a pro. The decision of who meets the above is at the league's discretion. Although we have all skill levels of players in TAP, we still need to provide a comfortable level of protection for the recreational player. This is where our first concern lies. We also need to protect the prize funds to which our players contribute so that everyone has a fair chance of winning.

### **Make-up Matches**

Some operators allow make-up matches and some do not. For those teams wishing to make matches up, it is important that the match be noted on your score sheet so that the credit can be applied to the correct team. Also, make-up matches must be agreed upon by both teams and have approval by the League Owner before they are considered official. All make-up matches should be completed within two (2) weeks of the date of the scheduled match. No matches can be made up within the last two weeks of league play. When a new division is starting, the League Owner may offer a new team make-ups or what is referred to as position rounds to allow that team to catch up. (NOTE: All make-ups are at the sole discretion of the League Owner.)

## Forfeits

League matches can be forfeited. The following circumstances are some examples:

A scheduled team match does not commence within fifteen (15) minutes of the scheduled match time. Points will be awarded depending on your local by-laws.

A team is unable to field a player whose handicap is appropriate for the given match, as described by the criteria set forth under the "Team Total Handicap Rules/Criteria" clause. If you do not post a player within the required 5 minute time frame, that match can be forfeited.

Un-sportsmanlike conduct can result in a match being forfeited.

A match can be forfeited if the player shooting the match is not current with league fees, or submits wrong data or involves himself in any form of cheating.

A match will be forfeited by both teams if both teams only have 4 players. NOTE: (Check with your League Owner for variations on forfeits)

All forfeits should be properly marked on the score sheets. For a team to claim a forfeit, the team that has the player present will write that player in, the team that is short player(s) will write 'forfeit' for their player. The Win / Loss circles are then marked accordingly. All forfeited matches assigned to a player will not count as one of their six (6) required matches. **Note:** Your league fees for the forfeited match are still due regardless of whether the match was played or not.

It is impossible to document all cases where forfeitures may apply. We recommend that you stay within the guidelines of the rules and play within the spirit and intent of the rules as good sportsmen should. **Note: There will always be players who, for whatever reason, try to test the system and manipulate the rules to their advantage. League Owners and officials easily come to recognize these people, and will take the appropriate steps necessary to control their behavior. These teams or players may be disbanded from the league or tournaments at any time.**

## **Burnout Strategy: For Play-offs & Upper-Level Play Only**

This is not a rule, but a strategy within rules. It is only necessary and used when a team is short players. The strategy is to put up one of your players that are not present in order to burn out one of the opponent's players. You may also wait for them to put up a player that your team does not want to play and burn that player. Ex. Team A puts up a 6 and Team B puts up a player that is not present for the match. This results in a forfeit (win) for that match for Team A. Regardless of whether a player is present or not, the team must always adhere to the "25 Rule".

## Concession

Concession consists of; **1)** A player breaking down their playing cue into two pieces except to change shafts. (**A player must notify their opponent if they plan to change shafts.**) Breaking down your break cue after the last game of the match has been broken is not loss of game. **2)** The player intentionally rakes the balls on the table before the game is complete. **3)** The opponent picks up the rack in an attempt to re-rack before the opponent has taken their last shot. **4)** The opponent offers to shake hands before the 10-Ball is shot.. **5)** Putting your hand in the pocket as to catch the cue ball from scratching on the 10-Ball.

## Byes

In some leagues, there will be an uneven number of teams competing during a league session. When this happens, a BYE will be written into the schedule to even out the schedule. On a night when a team is scheduled to receive a “BYE,” they will be credited three (3) points for that match. In the event of a team dropping out of a session, the BYE will come in the next week of play or the existing Bye will be eliminated. Teams, dropping out of a session, are uncontrollable and can happen. When it does, it creates a problem for the teams scheduled to play. This is out of our control as a league. We hope you will do your best as a team to complete your session.

## Handicapping

League handicaps are based on raw data taken from your score sheets for each league match. Complete, clear and accurately marked score sheets are a must. Players, Team Captains, League Representatives, League Directors or Operators do not have the right to change any data on the official roster. There is always the possibility that an error has been made when posting data. If this seems to be in question, the matter should be called to the attention of the League Owner, who will be responsible for addressing the matter. If you question your League Owner’s response, please feel free to contact the corporate office through our website @ [www.tapleague.com](http://www.tapleague.com), or call our toll-free number, **1-800-984-7665**. Falsifying a roster is a serious issue that will be addressed.

## New Players

A player joining the league who has not had a previously established handicap will play a “Race to 3” and will be counted as a “4” for purposes of the “25 Rule”. NOTE: (Owners may choose to set a “standard’ handicap for all unrated players. Captains should call their League Owner for clarification).

Under the Known Player Rule, any player with an established handicap from any other Pool system will start at a comparable TAP handicap determined by the League Director and will shoot under the handicapped race grid.

If a player is joining a 10-Ball team and has an established TAP 8 or 9-Ball rating, they will start in 10-Ball at that rating. If a player joined plays both 8 & 9 ball, the 8-ball rating will be used.

When a player with an established handicap plays a new player, his or her established handicap will be counted towards the “25 Rule.” After this match, the new player’s handicap will be subject to the same criteria as all other players, and will be evaluated based on his or her performance in subsequent league matches **Note:** The handicapping formula developed by TAP is copyrighted, and as such, is proprietary property belonging to TAP. While players are entitled to an explanation of how the system works, under no circumstances will they be provided with documentation of TAP’s proprietary computer algorithms) Our handicaps range from two (2) through seven (7). A seven (7) handicap is the highest level.

## **Score Keeping**

A league score sheet must be fully completed for every match played. This is the vehicle that determines your handicap and therefore is extremely important that these forms be completed accurately and neatly. Make sure either the Team Captain or a team player reviews or compares the sheets before leaving. Once the sheets have left the league location, they are final. As a rule, each team should assign a score keeper; however, there are cases where one person keeps score for both teams. In this case, these are the scores that will be used for accounting purposes without dispute. It is a matter of courtesy during league play that a player never keeps his or her own score because of their need to be able to concentrate on the game. However, after a player shoots, it is suggested that they keep score for the next team player. **Note:** Your league score sheets are the result of your paperwork.

If there are make-up matches or players to add/drop from your team they should be noted on the score sheet. If there are players with no "Player ID #'s" write it out in a note to the league office and put it in your team folder/packet so it can be properly taken care of. Make sure you have first and last names, along with the player(s) handicap, and their "race to" number on the sheet. This allows us to cross-reference the player if needed. Do not use nick names on the score sheets.

### **Score Sheet Categories**

**The following categories are noted on your score sheet:**

#### **COMPLETE (A Completed Skill Shot)**

Every time a player completes a skill shot, it should be marked on his or her side or column of the score sheet as a "COMP." If the player completes the skill shot and scratches, it is still marked as a "COMP" for the player. If the player completes a skill shot and other balls go in it is still recorded as (1) "COMP" and the other ball(s) are dead. It is the score keeper's responsibility to make sure the total "COMPLETES" are correct and legible in the appropriate areas for data entry

#### **MISS (A Shot Not Completed)**

Every time a player misses a shot, it is recorded as a "MISS." Failure to make a good hit is also recorded as a "MISS". Any balls pocketed as a result of a bad hit are marked under dead balls. All score keeping responsibilities also apply for misses.

### **DEF (Defense)**

When a player announces that he or she is playing a defensive shot, which is required, it is marked as such on the score sheet as a “DEF.” If this player does not successfully execute the shot, it is still marked as a defensive shot. A player may also call Defense and pocket their ball. In this case, their opponent takes command of the table where the cue ball rests. This is also marked as a defensive shot. When pocketing a ball on Defense, mark it as a “DEF” and a dead ball. All score keeping responsibilities also apply to defensive shots, also known as a safety shot.

**Note:** On each shot after the break, only make one hash mark for each shot, either a “COMP” “MISS” or “DEF.” **Never make a hash mark in two different categories for the same shot**

### **MOB (Made on Break)**

This is the number of balls made on the break or flung off the table as a result of the break at the beginning of each game even if you scratch. Mark the appropriate number in this area on the score sheet. **Use whole numbers, NOT hash marks for the MOB box.** If a player does not make any balls on the break, nothing is marked. Do not mark a “COMP” or “MISS” for the break shot. If a player makes the 10-Ball on the break, the 10-ball is spotted and the player continues to shoot provided no foul has occurred. All score keeping responsibilities also apply to Made on Break.

### **LOT (Left On Table)**

If a player wins the game with an early 10-ball, there will be balls left on the table. Those balls are to be credited to the opponent in “LOT”. All score keeping responsibilities also apply to the LOT column.

### **GAMES**

These two columns refer to the number of games each player has won and lost. After each game, mark whether each player won or lost that game. All score keeping responsibilities also applies to the GAMES column.

### **MATCH**

After the appropriate number of games has been played for the match, check or color in the “W” (Won) or “L” (Lost) for the appropriate player. All score keeping responsibilities also apply to the MATCH column.

## **TIME-OUTS**

Time-outs must be marked in the appropriate boxes by crossing out the game number as each game ends to minimize confusion over whether a marked time-out is from the current game or a previous game. All score keeping responsibilities also apply to TIME-OUTS.

## **RACE**

All players will play “Race to Handicap” matches. Simply mark the handicap and number of games needed to win in the appropriate area on the score sheet. All score keeping responsibilities also apply to the RACE column.

## **NAME**

On your score sheet, please clearly print your player’s first and last name as well as their Player ID#. Please do not use nick names. All score keeping responsibilities also apply to the NAME column.

## **League Session/Playoffs**

A league session consists of a specified number of weeks, meeting on a designated night and consisting of two opposing teams playing a specified number of consecutive matches. The winner of these matches will be awarded one (1) point for each match. Points accumulate over the course of the league session with the top teams qualifying to play in the Titleholders Event. There are different Play-off formats. Ask your League Owner for the format used in your local area. TAP corporate has the final say on how a play-off runs, allowing no disruptions for the main event. If you do not feel your finals are within our format at a local level, please feel free to contact the corporate office.

## **Slop Shots**

All slop shots stay down (with the exception of the 10-ball, which is spotted) and are marked as a MISS and a dead ball on the score sheet. The player’s opponent has command of the table where the cue ball comes to rest. Slop shots refer to any ball that goes into a pocket that was not called.

**English** – A term used to refer to spin placed on the cue ball by striking the cue ball to the right or left side of the cue ball’s vertical axis.

**Follow Stroke** – A stroke executed by striking the cue ball above its center line in an effort to impart forward spin on the ball so that it moves forward after striking the object ball. This stroke is usually executed for purposes of position play.

**Follow Through** – Accelerating the cue stick “through” the cue ball after actual contact in an effort to ensure that the cue ball follows a true course of roll.

**Foot Spot** – A point marked on the playing surface centered between the side rails and two diamonds from the foot rail.

**Foul** – An infraction of the rules, which can terminate a player’s turn at the table.

**“Frozen”** – Balls that are touching each other on the table, or touching a cushion, are said to be “frozen.”

**“Getting Shape”** – This is acquiring good position on the next ball to be shot.

**Going in Clean** – The pocketed object ball drops into the pocket without touching another ball.

**Head Spot** – A point marked on the playing surface centered between the side rails and two diamonds from the head rail.

**Head String** – An imaginary line on the playing surface connecting the side rails at the position of the two diamonds from the head rail.

**High Balls** – The set of balls in 8-Ball consisting of the nine (9) through fifteen (15). See “Stripes.”

**“Kick”** – Shooting the cue ball into one or more rails in order to contact or pocket a specific object ball.

**“Kiss”** – When the object ball or cue ball makes contact with a ball to deflect its trajectory during a shot.

**Lagging** – A procedure for determining who shoots first in any match. To lag, each player places a ball behind the head string and banks it off the foot rail. The player whose ball stops closest to the head rail can elect to break. NOTE: Contacting the head rail is legal.

**Low Balls** – These are the set of balls in 8-Ball consisting of the one (1) through seven (7). See “Solids.”

**Miscue** – This occurs when the tip of a cue stick slides off the cue ball because of inadequate chalking, a defective tip, or misapplication of “English.” A miscue could lead to a ball-in-hand situation for your opponent, especially if the miscue causes the cue ball to jump over any balls on the table.

**Miss** – Any shot that is not successfully completed.

**Object Ball** – The object ball is the ball that the shooter is attempting to hit, or any other ball that is of the player’s category. In 8-Ball, “low-balls” are the type numbered one (1) through seven (7), and “high-balls” are the type numbered nine (9) through fifteen (15).

**Masse'** - When a player attempts to curve the cue ball around a ball in order to strike an intended ball. A masse' is accomplished by raising the butt end of the cue and using either right or left English. Even raising the butt end of the cue a little and using right or left English will cause the cue ball to curve a little. A masse' is allowed in TAP but please respect the host locations rules.

**Position** – Intentional placement of the cue ball after a shot.

**Rack** – A device used to arrange balls on the foot spot to begin a new game.

**Rail** – The cushion of the table.

**Run** – A series of consecutive shots that have been successfully completed.

**Safety** – A defensive move in which the shooter attempts to prevent his or her opponent from having a high percentage shot.

**“Sandbagging”** (*Cheating*) – When a player intentionally plays well below his or her ability in order to maintain or lower their handicap, they are said to be “sandbagging.” This is a form of cheating and is not allowed in TAP.

**“Scratch”** – This is pocketing the cue ball, or the cue ball leaving the playing area.

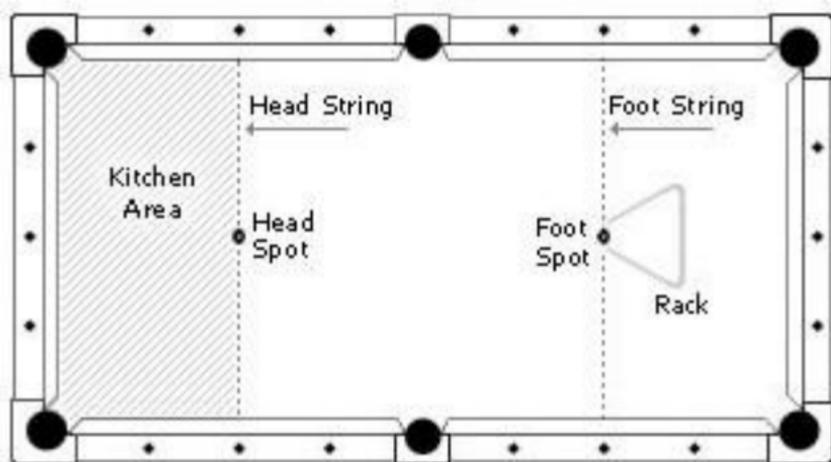
**Snooker** – A pocket game played on a six (6) by twelve (12) foot table with a cue ball, fifteen red balls and seven colored object balls.

**“Solids”** – The set of balls in 8-Ball consisting of the one (1) through seven (7). See Low Balls.

**“Spotting”** – Returning the balls to the table as specified by the rules of the game. The ball in question is returned to the “foot” spot.

**Stop Shot** – A shot executed with the intent of bring the cue ball to a complete stop immediately upon striking the object ball.

**“Stripes”** – The set of balls in 8-Ball consisting of the nine (9) through fifteen (15). See High Balls.



The line next to the cue ball is referred to as the “head string” or “behind the line.” You might also hear a player say “You’re in the kitchen” or “Getting your feet wet.” The line next to the rack of balls is referred to as the “foot string” or the foot spot area.

## Most Frequently Asked Questions About League Play

### **Q – Am I good enough to play in a league?**

**A –** It has often been said, “If you know the color of the cue ball you’re good enough to play in a league.” Here’s why. Each team of up to eight players must play five of those players each league night. The total handicaps of those five players must not exceed 25. Therefore, it is very important for each team to have some lower handicapped players in order to be able to shoot their higher handicapped players. All of the teams your team plays will also have some lower handicapped players against whom you will be very competitive even at your lower skill level.

### **Q – Will I become a better pool player if I join a league?**

**A –** Your skills will improve because in game situations you will have a coach who can use time-outs to help you with deciding which shot to take and explain why. If your skill level is two (2) the coach can give you unlimited assistance throughout your match. In addition, many teams practice together at other times and you will constantly receive help with your game from the best players on your team. After all, your teammates have an investment in you and want to help you improve your skills.

### **Q – Do I have to show up every night the league plays?**

**A –** That depends on how many players are on your team. If your team consists of eight (8) players and only five (5) play each league night, it would not be necessary for you to be present for every match. You should communicate with your team captain in order for him/her to plan who will play in each night.

### **Q – Who determines my handicap?**

**A** – All TAP handicaps are done by computer in the TAP Corporate Office. Your handicap is based on all the stats entered into a computer from the score sheets from all of all your matches played. Each calculation is composed of 80 algorithms and your handicap is an average of all TAP players in the USA and Canada.

**Q – What if I think my handicap is wrong?**

**A** – You should ask your League Owner to request an audit from the Corporate Office. When we receive a request for an audit from the Owner, we will review all information posted in the computer against the actual score sheets to check the accuracy of the posted stats. Should we find errors in stat postings, those errors will be corrected and the computer may or may not change your handicap.

**National Qualifications**

**These rules apply to teams that will participate in their local qualifiers and the national tournament**

- 1) You must be an active player in the format (8, 9 or 10 Ball) you qualified for.
- 2) You must be paid up to date on all leagues fees and membership dues.
- 3) You must have a minimum of (6) played matches in the format you qualified for (8, 9, or 10 Ball) in the last (16) weeks before the tournament cut-off date.
- 4) After qualifying, your team or players may switch teams or make 2 teams but the original team will come back together for the tournament.
- 5) If you are disqualified from one national event it will disqualify you from all events & mini tournaments. Meaning if you get disqualified from the Singles Event it disqualifies you from the Team Event.
- 6) As of September 2006 common players between teams are allowed however, a captain may not put the player against him/herself.
- 7) There are no player substitutes. The roster your team qualifies for Nationals with is your roster at Nationals.
- 8) Depending on how many teams are playing throughout your area determines how many teams advance to Nationals. Please talk to your League Director, Operator, or Owner to find out how many teams qualify from your area and how much money is put aside for your teams.
- 9) Teams advancing to Nationals will have transportation, hotel rooms and the Team Registration Fee provided per team. Transportation to and from the Tournament Location is your responsibility.

For the up-to-date version of the Rule Book, visit  
[WWW.TAPLEAGUE.COM](http://WWW.TAPLEAGUE.COM)