

**A Message To All Members of The Association for P.O.O.L.,  
Inc.**

We at The Association for P.O.O.L., Inc. (Privately Organized and Operated Leagues), also referred to as The TAP League, 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 The Association 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.

The Association has put a good deal of effort into developing the programs offered to our members. Our research has noted that there are dozens of different ways to play the games of

8-Ball and 9-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 our Association. 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.

The Association for P.O.O.L., Inc. 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?”*

Copyright – The Association for P.O.O.L., Inc. 2005

**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 an Association-sponsored event or league, you must be a bona fide member in good standing with the Association 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 our Association. 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 Licensee 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 because for suspension or revocation of your Association membership. Suspended players cannot participate in any Association-sponsored events. Players whose membership has been revoked can never participate in Association-sponsored events.

6. The Association for P.O.O.L., Inc. 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 Association-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 Director 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 Director or call the corporate office (number on the back of your membership card) with questions. If necessary, your question will be referred to The Association's corporate board. 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 our Association's activities.
10. Always respect the house rules of the establishment in which you are playing.
11. The Association for P.O.O.L., Inc. corporate office has the right to revoke your membership at any time.
12. The Association 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 not covered in this book. Sometimes your League Director may not be present. If this is the case take good sportsmanship into account. Both players should mutually agree on the situation or just re-rack that game and start over.

13. Some rules written hereinafter may be subject to change. A Licensee has the ability to adjust some rules or add a rule(s) for the betterment of their area. Licensee's who implement any rule changes or additions should do so in written form to make players aware. These changes or additions hereinafter should be referred to as by-laws. In addition, National and Valley Forge rules may also vary for a variety of reasons. If you are fortunate enough to make it to the TAP Nationals, be sure to have your Licensee go over those differences so you will be prepared when you come to play.

**Note:** In order to compete in the TAP Nationals, Valley Forge or any other TAP sanctioned event, you must have a minimum of 10 lifetime matches, 6 matches played during the last 6 months 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.

14. This rulebook supersedes all local bylaw rules.

## Table of Contents

A Message to All Members of The  
Association for P.O.O.L., Inc

The Rules Are As Follows: .....	2-3
8-Ball	
Object of the Game .....	7
Beginning Play.....	7
Choosing Your First Player .....	7
Lagging for the Break.....	7
Racking the Balls .....	7
The Break Shot .....	8
Continuing Play After the Break .....	8-9
Skill” Shots/Good Hits .....	9
Jumping/Masse’/Switching Cues.....	10
“Bank” Shots .....	10
Completing Multiple Balls In One Shot .....	10
Shooting the 8-Ball.....	10
Combination Shots .....	9-10
Defensive Shots .....	11
Ball Frozen to the Rail.....	11
Stalemated Game .....	11
Fouls .....	11
Foot Foul .....	11
Bad Hit .....	11
Scratch .....	12
Failure to Drive a Ball to a Rail.....	12
Ball Off the Table .....	12
Placing The Cue Ball.....	12
Push Shot .....	12
Split Hits.....	12
Accidental Movement of Balls .....	13
Payment of League Fees/Membership Payments .....	13
Coaching/Coaching Fouls .....	13-14
Interference and “Side-Line” Coaching.....	14
Speaking Another Language.....	14
Slow Play.....	15
Shot Clock .....	15
Time-Outs.....	15
Protests and Disputes.....	15-16
Fielding a Team-“The 25 Rule” .....	16
Team Total Handicap Rules/Criteria (The “25 Rule”).....	16
Violation of the “25 Rule” .....	16
Failure to Field a Legitimate Team.....	16
Adding and Dropping Players .....	16
The “Known Player” Rule .....	17
Professional Players.....	17
Make-up Matches .....	17
Forfeits .....	17-18
Burnout .....	
Strategy.....	18

“Concession” .....	18-19
“Byes” .....	19
Handicapping.....	19
New Players.....	19
Score Keeping .....	20
Score Sheet Categories .....	20
“COMPLETE” (Completed Skill Shot) .....	20
“MISS” (Missed Shot).....	20
“DEF” (Defensive Shot) .....	21
“MOB” (Balls Made on the Break) .....	21
“LOT” (Left on Table).....	21
“GAMES”.....	21
“MATCH” .....	21
“TIME-OUTS” .....	22
“RACE” .....	22
“NAME” .....	22
League Session/Playoffs.....	22
Slop Shots.....	22
Glossary of Commonly Used Pool Terms and “Slang” .....	22-24
Table Diagram .....	25
Most Frequently Asked Questions About League Play .....	25-26
National Qualifications.....	26
How to get your weekly league stats: Go to <a href="http://www.tapleague.com">www.tapleague.com</a> under “ <b>Weekly Stats</b> ” look up your territory name and then click on your division.	
Communication is key visit <a href="http://www.tapleague.com">www.tapleague.com</a> and sign up for our Message Board.	

**General Guidelines For Play**  
**8-Ball Rules**

**Object of the Game**

The game of 8-Ball is played with fifteen (15) balls numbered one through fifteen and a cue ball. The object of the game is to pocket either all of the “low balls” (solid numbers 1-7), or all of the “high balls” (striped numbers 9-15), after which you are entitled to shoot and hopefully pocket the 8-Ball. Once this has been done, the player legally pocketing their balls and the 8-Ball wins. 8-Ball on the break wins the game. 8-Ball on the break and a foul is a loss of game. Pocketing the 8-Ball out of turn is a loss of game. The 8-Ball does not have to go clean but the 8-Ball must be completed as a separate shot.

**Beginning Play**

**Choosing Your First Player**

Games commence with opposing Team Captains or players 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 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**

The fifteen object balls are racked in a triangular shape, with the 8-Ball in the center and the other balls distributed throughout the rack in random fashion with a solid in one bottom corner and a stripe in the other. The object ball at the top of the triangle should be centered on the foot spot. The player breaking may request a rack check before breaking the balls.

### **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 first or second 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 the breaking player does not have the cue ball 100% behind the head string, it is a foul to the opponent if the opponent has warned the breaking player at least once during any part of the match.** After that, it is the breaking player's responsibility to insure the cue ball is 100% behind the head string. Once a warning has been given it is recommended that the coach for the breaking player watch their player to prevent a ball in hand foul from being called. To avoid further controversy, once a warning has been given, the breaking player should confirm with his opponent before breaking. **If the breaking player breaks anyway after being warned, it is loss of game.**

If any balls, other than the 8-Ball, are driven off the table during the break shot, those balls stay down and are not spotted and it is a ball in hand foul behind the head string or the shooter can play it where it lays. If the cue ball is pocketed, or driven off the table during the break shot, the incoming player has cue ball-in-hand 100% behind the head string. All object balls that are pocketed "remain down." In either ball in hand case, the incoming player has his/her choice of object balls that are 50% or more past the head string on an "open table."

(NOTE: For scoring, the breaker gets the number of balls added to his or her score under the "Made on Break" (MOB) column.). A player pocketing the 8-Ball during a legal break wins the game. If the breaking player pockets the 8-Ball and scratches or drives the cue ball off the table, which is another form of a "scratch," that player loses the game. If the player drives the 8-Ball off the table during a legally executed break, he/she loses the game. If a player pockets the 8-Ball and drives another ball off the table other than the cue ball, the player wins the game (NOTE: In either of these instances, the remaining balls left on the table are added to both players LOT column on the score sheet with the breaking player credited with the lower count of stripes or solids and the opponent the higher count. "Win" and "Loss" columns on the score sheet for both players must also be properly marked.)

### **Continuing Play After the Break**

If the player pockets a ball on the break, that player continues to shoot until he/she misses or commits a foul. Regardless of which category of balls is made ("low balls" or "high balls"), the table remains "open" until a shooter has completed a skill shot by calling a ball in an assigned pocket. Once this has been accomplished, that category of balls belongs to that shooter for the remainder of the game and the remaining category of balls belongs to the opponent.

**Combination shots** are also “open” balls and are neutral until a player’s category has been determined with the exception of the 8-Ball, which is never neutral. In an open table situation, if a legal hit is made, the called ball goes in the called pocket and the cue ball scratches or is driven off the table, the shooter is now that category of balls. The table is no longer open. To execute a legal hit in an open table situation, you must strike any ball on the table except the 8-Ball and drive some ball to a rail or pocket a ball.

Once your category of balls has been determined, you complete your category of balls until you miss, foul, play defense, or fail to pocket the intended ball in the intended pocket. When this happens, your opponent assumes control of the table and does the same until the 8-Ball is legally pocketed. (NOTE: If a foul is committed on any shot, the incoming player has cue ball-in-hand anywhere on the table (except during the break).

Once the category of balls has been determined and a player shoots the wrong category of balls, the opponent must immediately notify the player that a foul has occurred. Should the opponent not inform the shooting player and another ball is pocketed, the shooting player now becomes that category of balls.

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

Our leagues are “call your pocket” which is also known as skill play or skill shots. Once a player has a particular category of balls, the first ball on the table that the cue ball strikes must be that category. After that, a ball on the table (any ball) must contact a rail. Pocketing a ball also constitutes contacting a rail or a good hit.

A foul occurs when the cue ball strikes the other category of balls; the 8-Ball other than on an 8 ball shot, the cue ball is pocketed, or knocked off the table or a ball fails to hit a rail after a legal hit. If a foul occurs, the opponent comes to the table with cue ball in hand anywhere on the table except during the break.

If the player pockets the called ball in a pocket other than the called pocket, that ball stays down and play passes to the opponent with the cue ball where it stopped.

If the player pockets the opponent’s ball, without pocketing the called ball in the called pocket, the opponent’s ball stays down and the opponent comes to the table with cue the ball where it stopped. Anytime the 8-Ball is pocketed out of turn it is a loss of game.

If a player pockets the called ball in the called pocket and also pockets any other balls, other than the 8-Ball or cue ball, the additional balls stay down.

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. Jump cues must be a minimum length of 40". **Using a shaft only is not allowed.**

### **"Bank" Shots**

Since this is a call ball and call pocket league 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, regardless of whether they are "high-balls"(stripes) or "low-balls (solids)," 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 8-Ball goes in a pocket out of turn it is a loss of game.

### **Shooting the 8-Ball**

When shooting the 8-Ball, you must mark the pocket you are calling. As long as the 8-Ball goes in the marked pocket after a good hit, the player wins. Any form of a scratch on the 8-Ball is loss of game. Anyone can remind the shooter to mark the pocket without it being considered a time-out. If the marker is already at the intended pocket, regardless of how it got there, the shooter does not have to physically touch the marker. The pocket intended is the closest pocket to the marker. When a shooter is on the 8-Ball, impeding the movement of the cue ball and or the 8-Ball while it is still in motion results in a loss of game. The 8-ball does not have to go clean. The 8-Ball hitting the pocket marker is a loss of game. **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 your category of balls first to execute a skill shot. The 8-Ball is never neutral, but can be used as part of a combination after the appropriate category of balls has first been hit. Any ball on the table can be used as part of the combination providing the cue ball strikes your category of balls first. If a category has not been determined, all balls are neutral with the exception of the 8-Ball as listed above.

### **Defensive Shots**

A player must call a defensive (or safety) shot when not attempting to pocket an object ball. To execute a defensive shot the shooter must make a legal hit. Any ball pocketed after the hit stays down and the shooter surrenders their shot to their opponent where the cue ball rests. The opposing player has the right to ask the scorekeeper to record that shot as a defensive shot. Any disputes should be worked out by the players first and, if necessary, contact the League Director for the final say. Not noting a defense shot repeatedly is unsportsmanlike and disciplinary actions could be taken against that player. You can call defense down and pocket your ball; however, your opponent now has command of the table where the cue ball rests. Defense down must be called prior to the shot and marked on the score sheet as a (DEF) defensive shot and a dead ball. There is no limit on the amount of times a player can call defense/defense down.

### **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.

### **Fouls:**

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 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 of the player's category, it is a bad hit and considered a foul. If the table is open and a ball does not hit a rail this is considered a foul. Your opponent would have cue ball-in-hand.

**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 8-Ball, it is loss of game. 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. (NOTE: If the table is “open,” any ball except the 8-Ball may be struck and then any ball must subsequently be driven to a rail to constitute a good shot, unless a ball is pocketed during the execution of the shot).

**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, except on the break, upon which the opponent gets cue ball-in-hand behind the head string. If a player is shooting the 8-Ball and the cue ball, or the 8-Ball, is driven off the table, it is loss of game. If a player drives one of his own balls off the table, the opponent is awarded cue ball-in-hand and the ball off the table is spotted. If a player drives one of his opponent’s balls off the table the ball stays down and the opponent is awarded cue ball-in-hand.

**Placing the cue ball** - In a ball in hand situation the cue ball is alive at all times. If while placing the cue ball, and the cue ball is still in your hand, a foul occurs if you bump another ball with any part of your person or the cue ball. 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. This can be executed by elevating the cue stick to, at least, a 45 degree angle. As long as this attempt 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. **Note: You DO NOT have to elevate your cue stick if you know how to make this shot without double hitting the cue ball. Elevating your cue stick is a recommendation to avoid being called for a foul.**

**“Split Hits”** – When a player contacts one of his or her balls and an opponent’s ball (or the 8-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 any other ball(s) in preparing to shoot or in the execution of a shot, it is not a foul. 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.

#### **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 in a Membership Application and pay the \$20.00 annual membership fee. 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. Licensees 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 have match points 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 (not at the table) with their coach. 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 never place the cue ball, if he/she does it is a foul and ball in hand to the opponent. 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 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 a timely fashion. (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.

#### **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 8-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 Licensee 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 players 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 opponents 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, the time remaining on the clock is still in use. **Note:** The 45 second shot clock is a benchmark average. Some shots can take longer 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. See the section marked "Coaching" for additional information.

### **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 The Association for P.O.O.L., Inc.’s handicapped league events. Our leagues are intended strictly for the amateur player. Although we have all skill levels of players in our Association, 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. Taking all of this into consideration, if you hold a pro card in any of the current professional associations, you will not be allowed to compete in any of our handicapped league events regardless of how much money you make. You will also be considered a pro-player and ineligible if you participate in sanctioned tournaments and win more than \$4,000.00 in one (1) calendar year.

### **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 Director 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 Director 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 Director.)

### **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. This does not apply to areas that allow a double play.

All forfeits should be properly marked on the score sheets. For a team to claim a forfeit, both teams must write their **team name** in place of the player's names, write FOFEIT in the completions box under the team that is forfeiting and mark the proper win and loss. 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 Directors 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:**

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. Once a team declares a player for a match, that player is now an eligible member of the roster for all team matches and their handicap applies towards the 25 Rule. This is a legal strategy within TAP rules. The rules can be used at all main TAP Tournaments.

**Note:** Some areas allow Double Play Matches within their rules. In this case, the player used for the Burnout is now an active and eligible member of the team and can be chosen to play twice as long as their handicap does not put the team over 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 8-Ball is shot.

5. Putting your hand in the pocket as to catch the cue ball from scratching on the 8-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 Licensees 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 Director, who will be responsible for addressing the matter. If you question your League Director'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 be started as a "4" for purposes of the "25 Rule" 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 an 8-Ball team and has an established TAP 9-Ball rating, they will start in 8-Ball at that rating.

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 The Association for P.O.O.L., Inc. is copyrighted, and as such, is proprietary property belonging to The Association. While players are entitled to an explanation of how the system works, under no circumstances will they be provided with documentation of the Association'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 report 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 report 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." In an open table situation, if the player completes the skill shot and scratches, it is still marked as a "COMP" and the player is now that category of balls. If a player completes a skill shot and other balls go in, either the players or the opponent's balls, it is still recorded as one (1) "COMPLETE" 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. (NOTE: There are eight (8) completes needed to win a game. There are variables in our system for multiple balls being pocketed, 8-Ball on the break, or an early 8-Ball. This, along with the balls left on the table (LOT) is a count system. If a player wins three (3) games with eight completes and the incorrect number of LOTs, you could be flagged for improper scoring which is a form of cheating in our league.

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

Every time a player misses a shot, it is recorded as a "MISS." If a player misses and pockets one of his or her opponent's balls, it is still marked as a "MISS" and the opponent's ball(s) stay down. If the player misses and pockets one of his or her balls, it stays down and is marked as a "MISS." Any balls pocketed as a result of a miss are marked under dead balls. See NOTE under the "COMPLETE" field. 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 DOWN" by pocketing their ball on a good hit. In this case, their opponent takes command of the table where the cue ball rests. This is also marked as a defensive shot. When calling Defense Down and pocketing a ball, mark it as a "DEF" and a dead ball. See NOTE under the "COMPLETE" field. 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 8-Ball on the break, put a hash mark under 8OB, LOTs need to be marked for both players. See NOTE under the "COMPLETE" field. All score keeping responsibilities also apply to Made on Break.

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

This column refers to the number of balls that a player has left on the table after his or her opponent has won the game. After each game, the person that lost, in most cases, has balls of their category left on the table. Add the number of balls and mark it in this column. **Use whole numbers, NOT hash marks for the LOT box.** **Note:** If a game has an early 8-Ball, there will be balls left on the table for both the winner and the loser. See NOTE under the "COMPLETE" field. All score keeping responsibilities also apply to Left On Table.

### **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. See NOTE under the "COMPLETE" field. 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. See NOTE under the "COMPLETE" field. 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. See NOTE under the "COMPLETE" field. All score keeping responsibilities also apply to TIME-OUTS.

**RACE**

Use the Handicap Race Grid to determine the number of games you need to win the match. This varies, depending upon the skill level of the players involved. Simply mark the handicap and number of games needed to win in the appropriate area on the score sheet. See NOTE under the "COMPLETE" field. 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. See NOTE under the "COMPLETE" field. 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 playoff formats. Ask your League Director for the format used in your local area. The Association for P.O.O.L., Inc. corporate office does have the final say on how a playoff 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 offices.

**Slop Shots**

All slop shots stay down 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. If the ball goes into the intended or called pocket, no matter how it gets there, it is a good shot.

**Dead Balls**

Any balls that are pocketed or off the table that are NOT, COMP, MOB or LOT.

**Glossary of Common Pool Terms**

**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. 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 The Association.

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

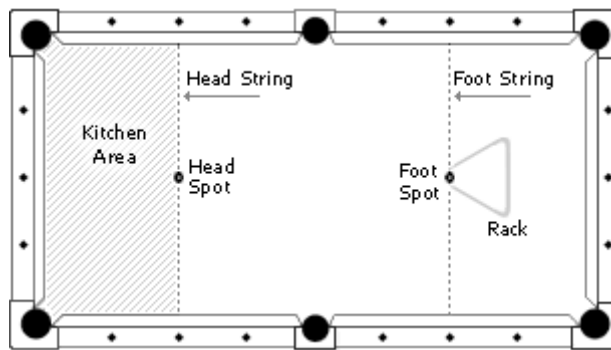
**Snooker** – A pocket game played on a six (6) by twelve (12) foot table with a cue ball, fifteen red balls and seven colored object balls.

**“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 Director to request an audit from the Corporate Office. When we receive a request for an audit from Licensees, 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**

1. All financial requirements must be fulfilled such as weekly league dues and annual memberships paid up to date.
2. You and your team must play 2 out of the 3 sessions in the year.  
**The only exception would be for teams that join the league in the 3<sup>rd</sup> session of the year. All other eligibility requirements apply.**  
Once your team qualifies you and your team must continue to play until the National Tournament is over. Your team or players may switch teams or make 2 teams but the original team will come back together for the tournament.
3. You must have a minimum of 10 life time matches in the product you are advancing in.
4. You have to have played a minimum of 6 times in the session your team qualified and 6 matches minimum in subsequent sessions.
5. You must stay on an active roster in the product you are advancing in and continue to play from the time you qualify until the Tournament you qualified for is over.
6. If you are disqualified from one event it will disqualify you from another. Meaning if you get disqualified from the Singles Event it disqualifies you from the Team Event.
7. As of September 2006 common players between teams are allowed however, a captain may not put the player against him/herself.
8. There are no player substitutes. The roster your team qualifies for Nationals with is your roster at Nationals.
9. Depending on how many teams are playing throughout your area determines how many teams advance to Nationals. Please talk to your League Director or Licensee to find out how many teams qualify from your area and how much money is put aside for your teams.
10. Teams advancing to Nationals will have airfare and 3 hotel rooms for 4 nights provided per team. Transportation to and from the Tournament Location is your responsibility.





INDEX

<b>1. Beginning Play.....</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Choosing your first player.....	2	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Lagging for break.....	2	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Racking the balls.....	2-3	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
The break shot.....	3	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Cue ball off the table.....	3	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
<b>2. Continuing play after the break.....</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
“Push out” after a legal break.....	3	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Continuing play.....	3	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Skill Shot/Good Hits .....	3	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Shootinn g the 9-ball .....	4	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Defensive/Safety shot .....	4	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
<b>3.Fouls.....</b>	<b>4-5</b>	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Scratch/Ball off the table.....	4	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Push shot.....	4	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Split hits .....	4-5	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Accidental movement of a ball.....	5	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Interference & “sideline” coaching .....	5	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
<b>defined.</b>		
Slow Play .....	5	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
<b>4. General rules .....</b>	<b>6-8</b>	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Coaching .....	6	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Shot clock .....	6	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Time-Outs .....	6	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Protests and Disputes .....	6	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Fielding a team/the “25 Rule” .....	6	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Adding and dropping players .....	7	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
The Known player rule .....	7	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Make-up Matches.....	7	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Forfeits .....	7-8	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Concession.....	8	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Byes .....	8	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Handicapping .....	8	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Score keeping.....	8-9	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>

# **TAP TEAM 9-BALL**

## **Object of the Game**

Team Tap 9-ball is played with nine object balls numbered 1 through 9 and the cue ball. On any shot the cue ball must contact the lowest numbered ball on the table first to constitute a legal shot. Once you have contacted the lowest numbered ball, any completions that follow allow you to continue your turn at the table. In 9-ball, as long as you have contacted the lowest numbered ball on the table first, a completion of that ball and/or any other ball is a legal shot. The shooter does NOT have to call their pocket. A player wins the game when he/she has legally pocketed the 9-ball.

## **Beginning Play**

### **Choosing your first player**

Games commence with opposing Team Captains or player 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 first match. After this has been determined, player selections will be alternated for the following matches until all league matches are completed. 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 you have selected your players, they must lag to see who breaks. Once two players have been selected, they must simultaneously "lag" for 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 closest to the head rail. 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**

The objects balls, numbered 1 through 9, are racked in a diamond shape with the 1-ball on the foot spot and the 9-ball in the center of the diamond. Before the break, the 1-ball also needs to be touching the two balls adjacent to it. If this is not the case, the person breaking can ask for a re-rack.

### **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 head ball, causing at least 4 balls to hit a rail, including the cue ball. Pocketing a ball also constitutes a legal break. If either 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 9-ball, are driven off the table during the break shot, those balls stay down and are not spotted. All objects balls that are pocketed remain down. If the 9-ball is driven off the table, then the 9-ball is spotted. It is then ball-in-hand for the incoming player anywhere on the table.

(NOTE: For scoring, the breaker gets the number of balls added to his or her score under the "made on break" (MOB) column). Any balls off the table are recorded as Dead Balls.

#### **Cue ball off the table**

If player drives the cue ball off the table, it is the incoming player's turn, ball in hand (anywhere on the table).

#### **Continuing Play After the Break**

If the player pockets a ball on the break, that player continues to shoot until he/she misses, commits a foul or plays defense without pocketing a ball. When this happens, your opponent assumes control of the table and does the same until the 9- ball is legally pocketed. NOTE: If a foul is committed on any shot, the incoming player 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 9-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).

#### **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 Shot/Good Hits**

The shooter must contact the lowest numbered ball on the table first to execute a legal hit. You do not have to call your pocket. After that, a ball on the table (any ball) must contact a rail. Pocketing a ball also constitutes contacting a rail or a good hit. If the cue ball strikes any ball other than the lowest numbered ball on the table or the cue ball is pocketed, or a ball fails to hit a rail, this is a "bad hit". A bad hits means a foul has been committed and the opponent comes to the table with cue ball in hand anywhere on the table.

### **Shooting the 9-ball**

In TAP team 9-ball the 9-ball is always the game ball for both players. If the 9-ball is pocketed legally, the game is over, however, if a foul is committed while the 9-ball is pocketed then the 9-ball is spotted and it is ball-in-hand for the incoming player.

### **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 or pocket a ball. 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, you must continue shooting. That shot is marked as a COMP on the score sheet. If the 9 Ball is pocketed on a defensive shot, it is a win. Note: Some shots in 9 Ball are made simply to make contact with your object ball because the ball is hidden from a clear shot. In these cases, a Miss should be marked instead of a Defense. Scorekeepers should use good judgment when making this decision.

### **Fouls:**

There is no "Three foul" rule in TAP 9-ball league. A player committing a foul must relinquish his/her turn at the table. The following are examples of commonly occurring fouls.

**Scratch/Ball Off the Table** - If a player pockets the cue ball or drives the cue ball off the table, it is a foul. If a player executes a shot and then scratches, the shot is considered complete and the ball stays down, unless the 9-ball drops or is driven off the table then it is spotted. Any other ball stays down and ball-in-hand for the incoming player. Any balls driven off the table are recorded as Dead Balls.

**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. This can be executed by elevating the cue stick to, at least, a 45 degree angle. As long as this attempt 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. **Note: You DO NOT have to elevate your cue stick if you know how to make this shot without double hitting the cue ball. Elevating your cue stick is a recommendation to avoid being called for a foul.**

**"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. Simultaneous contact of two balls is a good hit. 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 (that is not on either team) 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 shot goes to the shooter.

### **Accidental Movement of 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 any other ball(s) in preparing to shoot or in the execution of a shot, it is not a foul. 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.

### **Interference and "Sideline" 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 must warn the individual involved and that player's team captain/coach and player. After the warning, the penalties go as follows. 1st a warning, 2nd ball-in-hand for opponent, 3rd loss of game, 4th loss of match, 5th-team disqualified. Penalties do not start over after each match. They continue from first match to last match, for both teams. 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.

### **Slow Play**

Slow play can result in a ball-in-hand foul to your opponent, if you have been warned and continue to play slow. 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/referee will be final. (Note: 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.

## GENERAL RULES

### 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 or suggested by either the Coach or Player, it must be taken. Both players can then communicate to their coach during that time out. Players with 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. Any other assistance has to be within a 45-second shot clock. If the coach disrupts the balls or marks the table in any way or touches/places the cue ball on table it is a foul. The coach cannot touch the cue ball in any way. **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. The link to the player is through the coach. No other passage to that player is allowed. 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 a time-out, if they have a time-out remaining.

### Protests and Disputes

In our leagues 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 false protest. If you and your opponent are paying attention and sportsmanship/common sense are utilized, there will be no reason for protests or disputes.

### Fielding a Team - The "25 rule"

#### Team Total Handicap Rules/Criteria

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 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 to 18.)

### **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 byes laws for specific rules in your area.

### **The Known Player Rule**

The league director or other league official may assign a player that is brought into the league and does not have a previous handicap or league experience, a handicap. If his/her skill level is known, then that will be their starting handicap will be determined by the League Director and local By-Laws.

### **Make-up Matches**

Some operators allow makeup matches and some do not. For those teams wishing to do make-up matches, 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 director 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 director 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 directors.)

### **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.

A team is unable to field a player whose handicap is appropriate for the given match, as described by the "25 Rule"

If you do not post a player within the required time frame, that match can be forfeited.

Un-sportsman-like conduct can result in a match being forfeited.

A match can be forfeited if the player shooting their match is not current with league fees or submission of wrong data or any form of cheating.

All forfeits should be properly marked on the score sheets. For a team to claim a forfeit, both teams must write their **team name** in place of the player's names, write FOFEIT in the completions box under the team that is forfeiting and mark the proper win and loss. DO NOT list a player's name. Individual players will not get credited with a win. Only the Team will get credited. Forfeited matches will not count as one of the players (6) six required matches. **Note:** your league fees for the forfeited match are still due regardless if 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 with the spirit and intent of the rules.

#### **Concession**

If a player concedes, he loses the match. The unscrewing of a jointed cue stick into two pieces, except to change a shaft, is considered to be a concession. A player must notify their opponent if they plan to change the shaft, or the match is considered a forfeit.

#### **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. Some Licensees use different programs for addressing BYES. See your local rules.

#### **Handicapping New Players**

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 Licensees do not have the right to change any data on the official roster or score sheet. 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 Licensee or League Director who will be responsible for addressing the matter. A player joining the league who has not had a previously established handicap will start at a handicap 4. 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. If a player is joining a 9-Ball team and has an established TAP 8-Ball rating, they will start in 9-Ball at that rating.

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/her performance in subsequent league matches.

#### **Score Keeping**

A league score sheet must be fully completed for every match played. This is the vehicle that determines your handicap. It is extremely important that these forms be completed accurately and neatly. Make sure either the Team Captain or a team player review or compare the sheets before leaving. Once the sheets have left the league location, they are final. As a rule, each team should assign a

scorekeeper for each match; 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/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: In 9-Ball, each player races to their handicap. For example; if a H/C-5 plays a H/C-4, it is a 5-4 race to.