

# Official Rules of the



1. **PRACTICE TIME:** Practice is not allowed on any Tournament table, except during specified periods, and only with the permission of the Tournament Director. You are encouraged to practice on tables designated for that purpose and are asked to share the practice tables with any other contestants who wish to use them. If there is a wait for the practice tables, we ask that you limit your practice time to between 10 and 15 minutes. Designated practice tables are reserved for those contestants who have not yet been eliminated from the Tournament. Practice is not allowed on Tournament tables during play, even when Tournament tables are not in use.
2. **NO GAMBLING:** Gambling on pool is not permitted at any APA function, including this Tournament. Therefore, you are prohibited from gambling on pool at the Tournament site, even after the Tournament has ended or you have been eliminated from the Tournament. Any participant that gambles will face disqualification from the Tournament and/or forfeiture of all awards and prize money.
3. **FORFEIT TIME:** Forfeits will be declared 15 minutes after a match has been called. If a team has registered for the Tournament, a Tournament Official will attempt to locate the team before a forfeit is declared. However, Tournament Officials are not obligated to contact the team before a forfeit is declared. It is the team's responsibility to be present for their matches when they are called. The Tournament Director determines when a match is officially forfeited.
4. **SUDDEN DEATH FORMAT:** When the *Sudden Death* format is in effect, all other League rules apply to player selection. We ask all players to help keep to the schedule by being ready to play when their match is called, and by observing the *Match Time Guidelines*. Prior to the Tournament, the Tournament Director will decide whether Sudden Death rules will apply, or teams will be instructed to split their match, if matches become exceedingly long, Sudden Death will go into effect. See the Tournament Director for more information. Unless the League Operator or Tournament Director chooses to split matches, the following Sudden Death rules will apply:

**8-Ball:** This format is implemented 3 hours and 45 minutes\* or a time designated by the Tournament Director into an 8-Ball match. The rack must be struck in the fifth individual match by the *Sudden Death* mark, or all subsequent individual matches will begin with a rack worth two team points. If that two-point rack mathematically wins the team match, the team match will be over; if it does not win the team match, a second rack worth one team point will conclude that individual match. This procedure will continue in each subsequent individual match until a team mathematically wins or the overall match finishes in a tie: one two-point rack, followed by a one-point rack if necessary. Tie breakers will be decided by the team that won the most individual matches.

**Note: During 8-Ball Sudden Death, the individual match winner will be the player who wins the two-point rack.**

**9-Ball:** This format is implemented 3 hours\* or a time designated by the Tournament Director into a 9-Ball match. The rack must be struck in the fifth individual match by the *Sudden Death* mark, or all subsequent individual matches will consist of all points earned being doubled. Each object ball pocketed will count as two points and the 9-Ball will count as four points.

\*These time limits may vary. See the Tournament Director for more information when Sudden Death goes into effect.
5. **DECLARING PLAYERS:** Once both teams in a match have declared a player, the players cannot be changed unless the player declared by one team puts that team in jeopardy of violating the Team Skill Level Limit rule or the Limited Senior Skill Level rule.

6. **COACHING:** A time-out may be taken to coach a player only once per game. If a teammate suggests a time-out to the player, the time-out will be charged even if the player disagrees with the decision to take the time-out. However, if a player requests a time-out and the coach refuses to take the time-out, no time-out will be charged. Scorekeepers should mark all coaching time-outs on the scoresheet. When the player has ball-in-hand, coaches are allowed to place the cue ball during a coaching time-out. All rules regarding fouling the cue ball apply to a coach when they place the cue ball for a player.

**NOTE: When teams with a common player(s) meet during the Tournament, the common player(s) who choose to “sit-out” of the team match (per the Common Player rule stated below) are not permitted to captain, coach, or provide a coach with advice. Ineligible players are also not permitted to captain, coach, or provide a coach with advice.**

7. **OBLIGATION TO PRESENT AND CHECK IDENTIFICATION OF ALL PLAYERS:** All participants must have a current valid photo ID in the form of a state-issued driver's license or non-driver identification card, a military ID, or a passport (collectively any of these forms of identification will be referred to in these rules as a “Photo ID”). Players must have their Photo ID with them at all times during the Tournament and should present their Photo ID to their opponent without having to be asked. It is the responsibility of every player to verify that all opposing players have a current and valid Photo ID that positively identifies them as being the person shown on the scoresheet. Do not assume a player is who they say they are. If an opposing player has not voluntarily presented their Photo ID to you for verification, it is your responsibility to request that the opposing player present their Photo ID and to be satisfied as to the opposing player's identity prior to the lag. If you are not satisfied with the identity of an opposing player, you must immediately call over a Tournament Official to examine the identity of the questioned player. If the Tournament Official cannot readily verify the player's identity from the Photo ID, they may consult the Tournament Director. The determination of the Tournament Director regarding the identity of the player, is made in the Tournament Director's sole discretion and judgment and is final. If you fail to verify the identity of an opponent and the opposing player turns out to be an imposter or to not have a valid Photo ID, you may be bound by the results of the match and you may not be granted any relief or remedy, in the Tournament Director's sole judgment and discretion. If a player is put up to play and does not have their Photo ID, the individual match may be forfeited to the opponent without right of protest or appeal, regardless of the reason the player does not have a Photo ID. It is no excuse that a player's Photo ID was lost, left somewhere, or that the player needs to go get it. An imposter, a player who cannot verify their identity, or a player who enters or participates in the Tournament under fraudulent circumstances, is subject to immediate disqualification from the Tournament.
8. **SCOREKEEPING:** Scoresheets, with innings recorded and Defensive Shots marked must be kept by either one member of both teams, or by an official scorekeeper. Failure to mark Defensive Shots, may be grounds for the APA Handicap Review Committee to raise the skill levels of some or all of the players on that team. Scoresheets must be signed and turned in to the Control Table to receive credit for match wins. A Team Captain's refusal to sign a scoresheet does not affect any match protest. It is the responsibility of the winning team to make sure the Control Table receives both scoresheets.

**8-Ball:** Each match ends when one team mathematically wins the team match. A team mathematically wins their team match when the opposing team can no longer earn enough points to tie or win the match. Once one team mathematically wins a match, all play between the two teams must cease. The teams should write “NF” (for “Not Finished”) on the scoresheet. You must mark **Early 8s** (E8), **8-ball Scratch** (8S), **8 Wrong Pocket** (8WP), **8-on-the-Break** (8OB), and **Break-and-Runs** (BR) on your scoresheets.

**9-Ball:** Each match ends when one team reaches 51 points. Once one team reaches 51 points, all play between the two teams must cease. The teams should write “NF” (for “Not Finished”) on the scoresheet. You must also mark all balls pocketed, dead balls, 9-on-the-Snaps (9OS) and Break-and-Runs (BR).

**NOTE: Any player or team caught fraudulently keeping score – by adding innings, altering scoresheets in any way, or marking scoresheets in a way that does not reflect the play that occurred on the table – is subject to disqualification.**

9. **DRESS CODE:** Proper attire must be worn at all times in and around the Tournament site. The League Operator or Tournament Director shall determine whether a player's attire is proper and is responsible for requiring players whose attire is not proper to change. If the Tournament Director requires you to change your attire, compliance with the Tournament Director's direction is not a just cause for delaying the progress of a team match. The dress code will be enforced.
10. **NO EARPHONES:** You are not permitted to wear earphones of any type during Tournament play. This includes earbuds, headphones, headsets, Bluetooth devices, etc. Hearing aids and non-electronic earplugs are allowed.
11. **CELL PHONE AND SMARTWATCH USE:** Cell phone and smartwatch use is prohibited while a player is taking their turn at the table and during coaching time-outs.

12. **APPLICABLE RULES:** The rules contained in APA's **Official Team Manual** and **The Official APA/CPA 8-Ball & 9-Ball Game Rules Booklet** (collectively “APA's Standard Rules”) are applicable to all matches to the extent that they do not conflict with the Tournament Rules applicable to your event which include these Rules. Any Local Bylaws, applicable to your matches played in your Local League, or interpretations of the APA Standard Rules made by your Local League Operator that conflict with the Tournament Rules, or the Tournament Director's interpretation of APA's Standard Rules, do not apply. To the extent that APA's Standard Rules conflict with, or are inconsistent with, the Tournament Rules, the Tournament Rules shall control. The Tournament Director's interpretation of APA's Standard Rules and the Tournament Rules is final.

13. **SKILL LEVELS:** APA is the sole judge of a player's ability and may at any time raise a player's skill level if the APA believes that they are not playing at the player's Highest Skill Level (as that term is defined in the Certification Statement). It is your responsibility to ensure that every member on your roster plays at their Highest Skill Level. You are advised by APA to make certain you and your teammates fully understand and follow all of the Tournament rules and the game rules.

14. **CHAMPIONSHIP MINIMUM SKILL LEVELS:** During the World Pool Championships, ladies may participate at their assigned skill level, even if that assigned skill level is lower than a skill level 3. All other players must participate at a skill level 3 or higher.

15. **CUE BALL FOULS:** As a reminder, do not touch the cue ball while it is still rolling. Doing so may result in a foul.

16. **CLOSE HITS:** If a shot looks like it may result in a “bad hit,” stop the game and get a Tournament Official to observe the shot and make the call. Either player may stop the game to ask for a call. The decision of the Tournament Official is final. If a shot is close and a Tournament Official is not called, the ruling will most likely be in the shooter's favor.

17. **MARKING THE POCKET (8-BALL ONLY):** A coaster, pocket marker, or any other reasonable marker must be placed next to the pocket the 8-ball is intended to enter. It is recommended that you do not use chalk as a pocket marker, as it can create confusion, but the use of chalk as a pocket marker is not prohibited. If a player pockets the 8-ball without marking the intended pocket, and the opponent calls loss of game, it will result in a loss of game. Both players may use the same marker. Only one marker should be on the table at any time. However, even if more than one marker is on the table, as long as you clearly mark the pocket where you intend to pocket the 8-ball you will be deemed to have properly marked the pocket. If the marker is already at the intended pocket from a previous attempt or game, it is not necessary for the shooter to touch it, pick it up, or reposition it. Anyone may remind a player to place the marker and it will not be considered coaching or a foul.

**NOTE: Contacting a pocket marker with the 8-Ball is not a foul and the shot stands.**

18. **TEAM SKILL LEVEL LIMIT (23-RULE):** The Team Skill Level Limit rule will be enforced during this Tournament. No team may play five players whose combined skill levels (SL) exceed 23.

No team may put up a combination of players that makes it impossible for the team to comply with the 23-Rule. Doing so is a violation of the Team Skill Level Limit rule. If a team violates the Team Skill Level Limit rule their opponent will be declared the winner of the team match. The team match will be decided at the point where it becomes impossible for the violating team to comply with the Team Skill Level Limit rule.

It is your team's responsibility to ensure that your opponents comply with the Team Skill Level Limit rule. If the opposing team violates the rule, but wins the team match, and the violation is not noted on the scoresheet when the scoresheet is submitted to the Control Table, the opposing team may be declared the winner, and your team will be deemed to have waived the Team Skill Level Limit rule violation. The Tournament Director may forfeit the violating team from that team match whether it is or isn't noted on the scoresheet.

In addition, in order to avoid forfeiting individual matches, a team must be able to show that it can put up five players whose combined skill levels do not exceed 23. If, prior to the start of a team match, the combined skill levels of the five lowest skilled players on the team's roster exceed 23, the team must play four players whose skill levels do not exceed 19 (if possible) and forfeit the fifth match. If prior to the start of a team match, the combined skill levels of the five lowest skilled players on the team's roster exceed 23, and the combined skill levels of the four lowest skilled players on the roster exceed 19, the team must then play three players whose skill levels do not exceed 15 and forfeit the fourth and fifth matches.

19. **FORFEITING MATCHES:** Individual matches may be forfeited at any time during a team match. If an individual match is forfeited *after* the rack has been broken in that match, the skill level of both players in the match will count towards the Team Skill Level Limit rule and the Limited Senior Skill Level rule. If an individual match is forfeited *before* the rack has been broken in that match, the player on the team

receiving the forfeit remains eligible to play again as the forfeit does not count as a match played. However, regardless of the forfeit, at the end of the team match both teams must be able to show that they could have put up five players whose combined skill levels did not exceed 23 had all five individual matches been played. For example, in a situation where the opposing team puts up a SL7, you cannot make the SL7 unavailable to that team by putting up an unavailable player with the intention of forfeiting the individual match. In that case, the opposing team would regain the use of their SL7 as long as they are able to show that they could remain within the 23-Rule had all five individual matches been played.

**NOTE: During this Tournament, individual forfeits will be worth three points for 8-Ball and 20 points for 9-Ball. The team of any player that forfeits an individual match will not be awarded any points for that individual match, even if the forfeiting player forfeits after earning points in that individual match. Forfeited matches should be marked with a (F) on the scoresheet.**

**20. INELIGIBLE PLAYERS:** Ineligible players are those players who, for whatever reason, are not eligible to play in any match during this Tournament. The ineligible player’s skill level will be removed from all Higher Level Tournament rosters and those skill levels cannot be used for the purposes of determining whether a team can comply with the Team Skill Level Limit rule or the Common Player Rule. Ineligible players cannot coach or participate in group consensus.

**21. LIMITED NUMBER OF SENIOR SKILL LEVEL PLAYERS (8-BALL & 9-BALL):** Teams may not field more than two Senior Skill Level players in a match. Senior Skill Level players are those who have a skill level of 6 or higher. A violation of this rule officially occurs when the third Senior Skill Level player strikes the first rack in their match. The ineligible player forfeits the match, and the teams go on to the next match. The skill levels of both the ineligible player, and their opponent, will count towards the Team Skill Level Limit for that team match.

**NOTE: If a declared player will cause a team to violate the Limited Senior Skill Level rule that team is allowed to declare a different player prior to the rack being struck.**

**22. COMMON PLAYERS:** Any player that is on the roster of more than one team is considered a “common player.” There is no limit on how many rosters a player can be on during this Tournament, and there is no limit on how many common players a team may have. However, during the World Pool Championships, a team may not have more than two players that are common with another team in the same format and a player may be common on up to two teams in each format. This means a player may be on the rosters of up to two 8-Ball teams and two 9-Ball teams qualifying from this Tournament. If a player qualifies for the World Pool Championships with more than two teams in any format, the player must choose which two team rosters they will be on prior to entering the World Pool Championships.

If a common player’s two teams are scheduled to play against one another during this Tournament, the common player has two options:

1. the common player can choose to “sit out” the team match; or
2. the common player can “declare a team” prior to the start of the team match.

If the common player chooses the first option, they will not be allowed to play, captain, or coach, and neither team will be allowed to factor in their skill level for the purpose of determining whether the team can comply with the Team Skill Level Limit rule. However, the common player can advance with both teams, if neither is eliminated, or with the winning team if the losing team is eliminated as a result of losing the team match. If, after choosing to sit out the team match, the common player engages in the coaching of another player or gives advice to someone who is coaching a player, the common player will be deemed to have declared the team that the coached player plays for and treated as if the common players had chosen the second option and declared that team at the beginning of the match.

If the common player chooses the second option (or chooses the first option, but then coaches a player, or advises someone who coaches a player) the common player will be deemed to have “declared a team” and thus chosen to:

1. remain on one team’s roster for the remainder of the Tournament; and
2. be removed from the other team’s roster.

The common player will be marked as ineligible on the roster of the team they did not choose for the remainder of the Tournament, regardless of which team wins the team match between the common player’s two teams.

**NOTE: Matches will not be held up for players who are participating on multiple teams. A common player is prohibited from participating in more than one match simultaneously.**

**23. TIE BREAKERS**

**8-Ball:** In the event an 8-Ball team match is tied, the team that won the most individual matches will be declared the winner of the team match. If an 8-Ball team match is tied after four matches and neither team can field a fifth player, the team that won two individual matches first will be declared the winner.

When Sudden Death is in effect, the player that wins the two-point rack in a Sudden Death match is declared the winner of that particular individual match.

**9-Ball:** In the event a 9-Ball team match ends 50-50, the team that won the most individual matches will be declared the winner of the team match. If the 9-Ball team match is tied 40-40 after four matches and neither team can field a fifth player, the team that won two individual matches first will be declared the winner.

**24. EXCESSIVE SKILL LEVEL MOVEMENT:** If Higher Level Tournament play is to be truly meaningful and rewarding, then those who play below their true ability must be penalized. Any evidence of a player playing at a skill level below their true ability should be reported immediately to a Tournament Official at the Control Table. You and your team must certify that your skill level, as shown on the scoresheet of each match you play, is your Highest Skill Level as that term is defined in the Certification Statement. Likewise, you and your team must certify that the skill levels of each of your teammates, as shown on the scoresheet of each match your team plays, is the Highest Skill Level of each of those individuals.

Be sure the skill levels on your team’s roster reflect the true ability of all the team members.

- If any player on a team roster moves up two skill level numbers at the World Qualifier, there is a high probability that the team will be disqualified.
- If a team moves up two skill level numbers at the World Qualifier, an official Observer will be likely assigned to watch the team.
- If a team moves up three skill level numbers at the World Qualifier, the team will be heavily scrutinized and could possibly be disqualified.
- If a team moves up four skill level numbers at the World Qualifier, there is a high probability the team will be disqualified.

**25. PROTESTS:** All protests must be made to the Tournament Director in a sportsmanlike manner. Protests submitted by a team must be submitted by the Team Captain. There is a \$50.00 filing fee for any protest, which is refundable if the filing team wins the protest. Anyone who disrupts the Tournament, causes a scene, or causes other problems at or around the Tournament site will lose the right to protest. The Tournament Director will immediately consider the protest and issue a final decision in the matter. APA, as Tournament Director, is the highest authority. Any rulings made by the Tournament Director are final.

**NOTE: Player handicaps are reviewed after every match; therefore, skill level complaints are not acceptable protests. For skill level complaints, please write up your concerns and submit to the League Management/Tournament Director. Your input will be considered during handicap review**

**26. RULES OF CONDUCT:** APA has established, and will strictly enforce, the following Rules of Conduct which are applicable at all APA Championship Tournaments and all Higher Level Tournaments:

- a. No loud, abusive or profane language will be tolerated. You became an APA member to have a good time and to enjoy some friendly competition. If you experience a problem, one of the Tournament Officials will address it. Simply bring the matter to their attention. Remember that nearly every ruling will be seen as favoring one side or the other. Each team and player are required to accept official rulings without causing a scene.
- b. Unsportsmanlike conduct directed toward an opposing player, team or a Tournament Official will not be tolerated.
- c. Anyone involved in an incident that involves either physical abuse, violence, or the throwing of an item will be disqualified immediately, and immediately banned from the Tournament site.
- d. Anyone caught hitting a cue against a table, wall, floor, etc., or recklessly swinging a cue will be disqualified immediately and be banned from the Tournament site.
- e. Abusive behavior directed to the Tournament Director or any of their designees, including Tournament Officials, will not be tolerated and will be grounds for penalization, disqualification and/or a ban from the tournament site.
- f. Excessive slow play will not be tolerated. If your excessive slow play becomes a problem and remains a problem after you are warned about it, you may be penalized.

The penalties for violating any of the Rules of Conduct detailed above are as follows:  
*Except for incidents of slow play, a warning may or may not be given, and the Tournament Director can issue any of the four penalties below, regardless of whether any penalty has been previously issued, depending upon the severity of the situation.*

**Penalty Level 1:** Your opponent will be given ball-in-hand. If your opponent is still shooting, or already has ball-in-hand, then that player will be allowed to shoot until missing, and then be given ball-in-hand again.

**Penalty Level 2:** Your opponent will be granted the game in 8-Ball. In 9-Ball, your opponent will be granted the game, along with points for all balls remaining on the table.

**Penalty Level 3:** Your opponents will be granted the match.

**Penalty Level 4:** You will be ejected and/or disqualified.

**NOTE: If the violation or disturbance that caused the Tournament Director to issue a prior penalty does not cease, the Tournament Director and/or their designee has the right to go from one penalty level to the next penalty level immediately.**

**27. WARNINGS:** If a warning is given in an individual match, that warning will follow the team throughout the remainder of the World Qualifier Tournament in which the warning was given. For example, if a player is warned for sharking their opponent, and in a subsequent match a player from that same team is warned for sharking their opponent, the result will be a penalty. Such warnings will be noted by a Tournament Official on the scoresheets.

**28. SPORTSMANSHIP:** The primary objective of APA has always been to provide players of all abilities with the opportunity to enjoy friendly competition. It is expected that every player hopes to do well, and that all players and teams will do their best to win. However, each player and team are also expected to accept defeat in a sportsmanlike manner.

Two common examples of bad sportsmanship are: conceding an unfinished game; and breaking down a cue during play. Both forms of conduct are frowned upon by professionals and have no place in amateur play. All players are asked to allow opponents to finish the game before racking the balls or undoing cues. No penalty will be assessed unless, in the determination of the Tournament Director, such sportsmanship violations by a team are excessive.

Fouls can also cause sportsmanship issues to arise. A foul is a foul and should be observed as such regardless of whether the player believes that they will get caught failing to disclose a foul. A professional player will call a foul on himself; likewise, good sportsmanship dictates that amateur players acknowledge when they commit a foul. However, it is technically the responsibility of a player, and their Team Captain, to protect the outcome of the player’s match. Therefore, all players are advised to pay attention to their games and to be aware of when their opponent commits a foul.

**29. EQUIPMENT REGULATIONS:** Laser devices, mechanical cues and training/practice aids may not be used in Tournament play. Some specialty cues may be allowed on a limited basis. Special equipment, such as bridges and cue extenders, are legal. Players are expected to use equipment consistent with its intended purpose. Additional equipment guidelines applicable during APA Tournament play are set forth below:

**Jump Cues/Shafts/Tips:** Are not allowed

**Break Cues/Shafts/Tips:** Sometimes combined with jump cues to form a jump-break cue, these cues/shafts/tips are allowed in Tournament play for breaking only.

**Regular Shooting Cues/Shafts/Tips:** These cues/shafts/tips may be used to perform jump shots, massé shots and break shots in all APA League and Tournament play. You may not “break down” your Regular Shooting Cue to perform a jump shot.

**NOTE 1: Using a regular shooting cue to break does not qualify it as a “break cue”.**  
**NOTE 2: Wheelchair players and players who are limited in their height are allowed to use a junior cue or “shortie” as a regular shooting cue.**  
**NOTE 3: You may only switch cues/shafts/tips between racks, immediately following your break shot, or in instances of cue/shaft/tip failure that prevent the cue/shaft/tip from performing.**

Any equipment bearing any message or image that is sexually explicit or political in nature or may be offensive due to the use of profanity or the promotion of violence, alcoholism or substance abuse, shall be prohibited from use in this Tournament. The Tournament Director shall have the right to inspect a player’s cue(s) at any time during the Tournament without prior notice to the player, and if the cue(s) are found to be in violation of this rule, the player shall immediately cease using the objectionable cue during Tournament play or face immediate disqualification and forfeiture of all prize money earned and/or entry fee paid.

**30. DISQUALIFICATION:** The Tournament Director has the authority to disqualify any player or team from this Tournament and may exercise that authority in their sole judgment and discretion at any time - prior to, during, or after the Tournament. The following may constitute grounds for disqualification:

- a. excessive skill level movement,
- b. irregularities in, or falsification of, any Tournament scoresheet or documents relating to your eligibility or qualification for this Tournament,
- c. fraudulent actions or omissions of any nature,
- d. sportsmanship violations or conduct deemed to discredit or affect the integrity of the Tournament, APA or the sport; or
- e. any other behavior deemed deserving of disqualification by the Tournament Director.

The members of any disqualified team will be deemed to have forfeited all titles, awards, and prize money they would have otherwise been entitled to. Each member of a disqualified team is subject to a minimum two-year suspension of their APA membership.