

Dealing with those Darn Late Nights

Everyone has been through it many times. You show up for league at 7 PM, start right on time, yet STILL don't finish all the matches until well after midnight. We hear it all the time. In fact, we have had a number of cases where the bar closed and everyone had to leave before they were done with league play! The late nights have caused many people to give up playing in APA leagues – they just cannot be out that late and still get up for work in the morning.



Can anything be done about the late nights? Absolutely. But it's up to the teams and players themselves to make it happen. The rules and guidelines are already in place, but if you don't follow them you'll end up with many late nights of league play. Obviously, the first big time saver is splitting tables. The Team Manual states that you must split to a second table if you're not in the fourth match by official league time plus two hours, unless no second table is available or **both** teams agree not to split. There is no option, and sportsmanship penalties can be assessed to teams that make an *available* table *unavailable*. Splitting tables can save as much as an hour or two on league night.

But it's often not possible to split tables. What then? You're stuck with the late nights, right? Wrong. What follows is a list of suggestions based on existing rules and guidelines. You may be surprised when you get to the end and see how much time you can actually save by just following the rules.

- 1) Be ready to play when your match is called. Lots of players have to go to the bathroom, get a drink, go outside for a cigarette, put their cues together, finish their practice game, etc., right when their match is called. Have all that stuff done and be ready before your name is called. Estimated time saved – five minutes per match for three of the five matches. Total savings, fifteen minutes.
- 2) Follow the time guidelines when putting up players. The guideline is two minutes to put up a player. If each team takes three minutes, that's two extra minutes per match. However, there's no reason the team putting up first can't already have that decision made before the end of the previous match. That's an additional two minutes per match. Total savings, twenty minutes.
- 3) Pay attention when you're playing your match, and get to the table right away when it's your turn. If you get there ten seconds sooner it's a big time saver. Ten seconds may not seem like much, but think about it. The average match is about 20 innings. Every inning, both players take a turn at the table. That's 40 times the ten second savings, for a total savings of six minutes per match. Total savings, thirty minutes.
- 4) Follow the guideline of twenty seconds per shot, on average. Like the previous item, this one saves a bunch of time. Watch what happens if you average twenty-five seconds, using 9-Ball as an example. The average points needed by the winner of a 9-Ball match is around thirty. That's one shot per point, minus a few because the 9-Ball is two points. So we'll call it twenty-five successful balls made, plus the twenty misses from the previous item. That means just the winner will take an extra 225 seconds (almost six minutes) by averaging just five seconds over the guideline. Let's say the loser takes half as many shots – each match is lasting nine minutes longer than it should if everyone averages a mere five seconds more than the guideline. Total savings, forty-five minutes.
- 5) Limit time-outs to one minute maximum. This is a biggie. Let's say you take two minutes per time out. In each match, there are probably an average of four time outs per player. That's forty time outs. Total savings, forty minutes.

Songs on the Jukebox...\$2
A couple of beers.....\$4
League Fees.....\$6
**An evening of fun with
your friends AND getting
home by 11...PRICELESS**

Now add it all up. If you save all the time estimated in the list above, it's 150 minutes, or two and a half hours. Instead of finishing league play at 1 AM, you're getting home by 11 PM.

Think it's all BS? Maybe your team isn't guilty of all the things above, maybe just one or two? Well, the estimates above are conservative. Consider the effect of taking forty seconds per shot or taking five-minute time outs, for example. It adds up. We believe that simply following the rules and guidelines can cut an hour or two off the length of the average league night.