

## Building Better Teams

Because we are amid registration for Fall, this is a good opportunity to discuss Building Better Teams. Building Better Teams is not about building teams that can win your division, World Qualifiers, and the World Pool Championships, although all these things CAN happen! This is about building teams with BALANCE, balance of skill levels so growth can happen and not relying on your beginner skill levels to have to be there every week and sometimes playing twice per night just to make numbers.

There is stress on our beginner skill level players on BEING the player that always needs to show up, playing twice, being unable to social and have fun, and the additional financial stress of needing to play a second match. All players play because they LOVE the game but there should be balance so that fun can be had by all.

Every session, teams ask us for beginner players. YOU will have more of a chance to find those beginners than we will. Ask EVERYONE! Don't be afraid of the "no". It turns out, we are ALL afraid of the "no". Why? It's because we fear rejection, rejection of ourselves and rejection of what we do, what we love. I am telling you, don't be afraid of the "no". What is the WORST thing that can happen? They say "no". Ask at all your usual haunts. Most of us are creatures of habit, always going to the same convenience store, same gas station, grocery store, etc. You are not a stranger to them and even if you were, so what? The worst they can say is "no". Everywhere I go, I talk about what we do. Last week at Dollar Tree when I was buying items for the school fund drive and the Vegas Survival Bags, my cashier turned out to be a regular at Good Timez, had friends, had NO idea about league, and wanted my business card so that she could call and talk to me further. INVITE these people to join you on your regular league night to hang out and see how much fun can be had. SHOW them how to have a good time. There are so many people nowadays without a friend/circle group like newcomers to the area. Don't be afraid of the "no".

Starting this Fall Session, to HELP alleviate the stress on our beginner skill level players, teams can ONLY play one player twice during the 1<sup>st</sup> four weeks of the session. If a team has an EMERGENCY (only to be determined by the APA of North Alabama staff) OR a reschedule THEN they may also play a player twice BUT this

REQUIRES communication with APA of North Alabama staff member. IF a team plays someone twice WITHOUT receiving prior approval, THEN NO POINTS WILL BE AWARDED FOR THE PLAYER WHO HAS PLAYED MATCH TWICE. No points will go to the other team either because they allowed it to happen.

You KNOW who on your teams don't show up, WE know too. By this one act, Cyndi and I believe commitment and attendance to your teams will increase thereby removing the stress off the beginner players. Have those hard conversations with the players on your team that are not showing up to play on a regular basis and players who are thinking about joining your teams.

We WANT our teams to succeed and have FUN! If we continue to allow you to form teams depending on your low skill level players, we are setting you up to fail.

Work on your communication skills. One of the BEST things that you can do is to set up group chats between members of your team. This allows everyone on the team to know when someone must go out of town to work or is sick.

Communicate with your Team Captains, Division Reps, APA of North Alabama staff, and League Operators.

Double Jeopardy teams, here is a tip for you, don't have the same Team Captain on each side. Mostly we see the higher skill level players being the Team Captain. When you allow a new player or beginner skill level or even a mid-skill level player to be the Team Captain, you are setting them up to succeed. They can learn more from doing than watching. They might even want to captain their own team someday. It is a great way to teach. There is the ADDED benefit that they can be eligible for the Team Captain Qualifiers and Team Captain Championship. It takes all skill levels to be able to be on a Team Captain Team. Only one Senior Skill Level player can compete in a Team Captain Match and the three matches played cannot exceed 15 in skill level combination.