

# The Equalizer® Handicap System

The uniqueness of *The Equalizer*® handicap system is that it brings out the best in both the novice/beginning player and the expert should they compete in a match. With *The Equalizer*®, it's feasible for a beginner to have a nearly equal chance in a match against a more highly skilled player. *The Equalizer*® aids the lesser skilled player by dictating mathematically that he/she needs to win fewer games or points than his opponent to win the match. (In golf and bowling, you give or get strokes or pins.)

In an APA League, you give or get games in the 8-Ball format and you give or get points in the 9-Ball format. How many games or points you give or get is determined by comparing your skill level to your opponent's skill level. A higher skilled player must give games or points to a lower-skilled player, thus evening the match.

## 8-Ball

### 1. HOW HANDICAPS ARE DETERMINED

Your Local League Office calculates and reports skill levels to the teams on a regular basis. Your skill level determines how many games you have to earn to win your match. Skill levels are maintained, calculated and updated by the Local League Office. The process includes a number of factors including the application of specific mathematical formulas to the data on the weekly scoresheets, win/loss records, Higher Level Tournament performance, qualitative judgment by Handicap Advisory Committees, and other considerations. You are asked to refrain from attempting to keep your own records as it is generally a disruptive practice. The APA appreciates your cooperation with this policy.

### 2. HOW TO GET STARTED

New players do not have a skill level established, so a standard starting method has been devised for new players. Statistics show that 69% of male players are SL4s and higher while 78% of ladies are SL3s and below. Gentleman will play their first match as a skill level 4 (SL4) and ladies will begin as a SL3. A League Operator is authorized to assign special skill levels and lowest attainables to new players who are known to be highly skilled players or to players who have previously established a skill level in another format.

As a result of your first match, a skill level is established and reported for you. It is against the rules for a player who has an established skill level to attempt to reestablish his skill level at a later time. For example, you can't quit for awhile and then rejoin the League or transfer to another League area as a nonrated player. You are obligated to disclose the fact that you are a former or current member in another League area with an established skill level.

**TURN OVER**

### 3. ONCE SKILL LEVELS ARE ESTABLISHED

Now you can look at how your skill level and the skill levels of the other players interact to create the highly competitive atmosphere that has made this League so successful. Remember you are going to give or get games in 8-Ball. During regular weekly League play, simply refer to the “Games Must Win” chart shown below. This chart is printed on the scoresheets for your convenience.

"GAMES MUST WIN" CHART							
		YOUR OPPONENT					
S/L	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Y O U	2	2/2	2/3	2/4	2/5	2/6	2/7
	3	3/2	2/2	2/3	2/4	2/5	2/6
	4	4/2	3/2	3/3	3/4	3/5	2/5
	5	5/2	4/2	4/3	4/4	4/5	3/5
	6	6/2	5/2	5/3	5/4	5/5	4/5
	7	7/2	6/2	5/2	5/3	5/4	5/5

### 4. HOW TO USE THE CHART

To read the chart, find your skill level along the left side. Then find your opponent's skill level along the top of the chart. Now, track to the right from your skill level and down from your opponent's until the two tracks meet. In that block the first number is the number you will race to, and the second is the number your opponent will race to. The two numbers involved should have the same differential as your skill levels do. For example, a SL6 playing a SL4 tracks to the block with 5/3 (circled) in it. The SL6 races to 5 games, while the SL4 races to 3. 5 to 3 is a differential of 2, just as 6 to 4 is a differential of 2.

**Example 1:** Bill is scheduled to play Frank. Frank is a SL5. Bill just joined the League and is a nonrated player, meaning that he does not have a skill level yet. Therefore, Bill plays as a SL4 and Frank plays at his skill level, which is 5. Referring to the “Games Must Win” chart, you can see that in a match between a SL5 and a SL4 the SL5 player races to 4 and the nonrated player races to 3. That is the difference of 1 game, which is also the difference in the Skill Levels. Frank is going to have to win 4 games of 8-Ball before Bill wins 3. That is Bill's advantage or equalizer.

**Example 2:** In the fifth week of play, John, who is a SL6, and Mary, who is a SL3, are scheduled to play each other. Referring to the “Games Must Win” chart, you can see that a match between a SL6 and a SL3 has the SL6 player racing to 5 and the SL3 player racing to 2. That is the difference of 3 games, which is the difference in their skill levels. John is going to have to win 5 games of 8-Ball before Mary wins 2. That is Mary's advantage or equalizer.