

Sportsmanship and Communication

Good sportsmanship lies at the heart of any endeavor involving competition. In many games of pocket billiards, players meet on the table in a contest that takes place in an environment that is unique in sports in one significant aspect - players are often required to tell each other exactly what is about to happen and what their intentions are *before* they act.

Any referee or tournament director will tell you that many of the problems they have faced involving controversy between players could have been prevented if the players had been communicating effectively. Far too many disputes involve nothing more than whether or not a safety was declared or which pocket or ball was called.

The difficulty can often be traced to players who simply do not practice good communication at the table. We designed CMPL rules to reduce the number of disputes. However, it is impossible to control the issue completely with rules. The solution lies with you – the players.

We encourage you to dedicate yourself to open and friendly communication during your match:

- When you are at the table, pay attention to how your shot appears. If you think there is a chance that your opponent might not understand your intentions, please call the shot.
- When you do call shots, please do so clearly. If verbal, face your opponent and make eye contact. If by gesture, make a clear and definite motion.
- When you are in the chair, pay attention to the game and to your opponent. Communication is a two way street! If your opponent is telling you what they intend to do, listen carefully and clearly acknowledge that you understand. If you do not understand, get clarification.
- Do not let personality conflicts affect your efforts at communication. It does not matter how you feel about your opponent – you must always commit yourself to open and civil conversation and communication during your match.

Remember that your opponent has the right to know what you are doing while you are at the table. If you do not want to stop and answer questions, you can prevent that by communicating freely and clearly. As the person in the chair, you must remember that while you have the right to know what the shooter is attempting, you cannot interrupt them after they are down on a shot. If you sense a situation developing in which you might have a question, try to ask it early. At the same time, remember that you cannot use the requirement of communication in an unsportsmanlike manner. You should know what a clearly obvious shot is. Do not ask unnecessary questions in such a situation.

Good communication is simply good sportsmanship, which is required of all players. Please practice it faithfully and consistently. It will make the game more enjoyable for all of us.