

BAPA League Rules and Information

Scribed by Walter based on late night discussions with Eugene and crew.

Updated 5/3/02 Season

Updated March 2015

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Checklist / Open items

“Unofficial League Nights” / Major tournaments

Bracket population algorithm

BAPA

The Bay Area Pinball Association, BAPA, is a group of people that meets weekly for competitive pinball and socializing. We're always looking for new members to come out and play. All skill levels, from novice to wizard, are welcome. Some people are more competitive than others, but all like to have fun playing pinball!

Regular Season Play

League Night

BAPA league nights are Thursday evenings from 8pm until all league games are completed (generally around 10pm). League nights are held at both public and private locations. Please see the website for details. New players interested in joining the league should connect with us for the first couple of times at one of our public locations as private locations are often times restricted to people that have been members for a while. For most league locations, warm-up time is available before 8pm.

Season Duration

Each league season consists of 15 weeks of play. Often, this is for 15 consecutive weeks. However, league play is suspended when major holidays or key pinball events, like tournaments, occur on a league night or following weekend.

At the end of each 15 weeks of play a playoff event is held for that season. Playoffs are always held on a Saturday or Sunday and take all day. This event is scheduled for a weekend after the 15th week of play is completed.

"Unofficial League Nights" are held during the time between week 15 and playoffs as well as any night league play has been suspended. As they are unofficial, it is up to league members to suggest locations for the week's play. League members may also suggest alternative formats for these evenings.

Match-ups

Each week, the players competing are matched up and compete on 4 different pinball machines. The total number of players is divided up into groups as follows:

```
# of players Groupings
1 or 2 Not enough people for league play
3 3
4 4
5 3 / 2 (Current scoring rules & software do not support 5 players)
6 3 / 3
7 4 / 3
8 4 / 4
9 3 / 3 / 3
...
```

It is optimal to have 4 players in each group so that each player gets a turn to play first, second, third and fourth on one of the machines.

To determine which players compete against each other, players are first listed by the number of points they earned during their most recent week played. If a player is new, they are added as if their last score was 10 points. This may be adjusted at the discretion of the person running the league night. Once ordered, the players are placed into groups. If multiple players have the same number of points, their historical percentage is used to order them.

Machine Selection

Each league location must have a minimum of 4 pinball machines to support the league play format. More machines are desirable to speed league play. All properly working pinball machines at a location may be used for league play. Machines are assigned to groups randomly based on availability so each may end up playing a different set of 4 machines.

All functional machines are generally eligible for play. The most common reason for a machine to be declared ineligible is due to a machine malfunction. However, the league President or designate may declare any machine ineligible. The most common reason this is done is for excessive play time when league attendance is large or the location closes early.

When a league member hosts the league for a week at their home / location, then they may also determine that a machine is ineligible for play.

If there is a serious machine malfunction that requires a replacement machine, the league President or his delegate is responsible for making the selection.

Play Order

This is the play order:

Player 1: 1 2 3 4
Player 2: 2 1 4 3
Player 3: 3 4 1 2
Player 4: 4 3 2 1

Or for 3 player groups:

Player 1: 1 2 2 3
Player 2: 2 1 3 2
Player 3: 3 3 1 1

Points

Each player is awarded 1 (worst) to 4 (best) points based on their performance on each machine and so can achieve 4 to 16 points a week.

In the event that a group does not have 4 players, each player receives 1, 2, or 3 base points based on their performance on each machine. The top player on each machine receives 1 bonus point for doubling the middle player's score. The middle player on each machine receives 1 bonus point for doubling the bottom player's score. The bottom player receives a bonus point for beating the differential between the top two player's scores.

Each player's points for each machine are added together for their total week's score. A running total for all 15 weeks is maintained for each person.

Percentage

Occasionally players cannot make it to all 15 weeks in a season. To account for this, a player's percentage is also calculated. Percentage is determined by dividing the number of points the player earned by the total number of points that could have been earned in the weeks played. The 16-point scale is adjusted to make finishing last in every game (4 points) be 0%. This is shown in the following table:

Weekly Shifted Percentage
Points Range

-----	-----	-----
4	0	0%
5	1	8%
6	2	17%
7	3	25%
8	4	33%
9	5	42%
10	6	50%
11	7	58%
12	8	67%
13	9	75%
14	10	83%
15	11	92%
16	12	100%

Therefore the formula is:

$$\text{Cumulative \%} = (\text{Total points earned} - \# \text{ of weeks played} \times 4) / (\# \text{ of weeks played} \times 12)$$

Usage of Points & Percentage

Percentage is a measure of how well each player performed when they competed. Therefore players are seeded for playoffs using their percentage.

Points (besides being used to calculate percentage) are in part a measure of a player's participation in league play. Players that participate more have a greater chance to accumulate points. To reward participation in league, available playoff byes are assigned to players by their ranking by points. In addition, during playoff matches, the player with the higher number of points gets first choice of play order or machine selection.

WPPR points are also awarded for regular season play based on point ranking.

Playoffs

Qualification

A player must play 5 weeks of the regular season to qualify for playoffs and be a member in good standing.

Date

The soonest playoffs can occur is the weekend after Week 15 play. There is no latest date. The date for playoffs is selected by a vote of players that have qualified for playoffs.

The voting rules are designed to optimize the date so that everyone that qualified can play during playoffs. As the league has grown in size we have had to compromise on a date that **most** people can make.

The President posts a voting notice to the Facebook group. Players that have qualified for playoffs (or will have qualified by the end of the season) must vote as directed.

The notice contains a list of possible playoff dates. For each available date, a player must vote **2, 1, 0**, or **-1**. These numbers have the following meanings:

2: Works great. This would be an awesome date for you to attend pinball playoffs.

1: Is ok. Not the best, but you'll be pretty happy having playoffs on this date.

0: Rather not. It's difficult for you, but if this is the date that playoffs happen, you'll be there.

-1: Can't make it. This is how you vote for a date on which you will not attend playoffs if that's when they happen.

If a player casts a vote of **0, 1, or 2**, they're obligated to show up if that's the date that playoffs happen. If they don't, there's a pretty good chance they'll be banned from the following season, because accommodations may have been made for them, and they decided to not show up anyway.

Also, there is a pain-in-the-ass rule in effect. If a player has a lot of **-1** votes, their votes will be worth less than those of people who don't have so many **-1** votes. The philosophy is that a player with a lot of **-1** votes probably has a lot of better things to do and doesn't care that much about pinball playoffs.

The voting notice will specify the date that the voting period ends. Votes received after this time are counted at the discretion of the President.

Location

The location for playoffs is selected by the league President near the end of each season.

Refreshments

The event is a supplemented pot luck.

Each person is responsible for bringing a dish to share. To eliminate duplication it is recommended to post what you will bring to the Facebook group.

The league supplies sodas and Fred steak (*1, *2).

Playoff Machines

The machines used for playoffs and the method of selecting them depend on the location.

Large Location (generally > 15 machines) - i.e. Pacific Pinball Museum

All functional machines are eligible for play. The President may designate specific machines ineligible at their discretion.

Each eligible machine may only be selected by a player once during the entire event, unless they have already selected every eligible machine. Note that a player's opponent may select a machine that the player has already played, so a player may end up playing the same machine multiple times.

Small Location - i.e. Pizza Depot or a League Member's Home

All functional machines are eligible for play. The President may designate specific machines ineligible at their discretion.

Players may choose a machine from a randomly drawn sub-pool of machines. The President determines the size of the sub-pool based on the total number of machines available.

The software that prints play slips randomly selects a 4 machine subset out of which the players can select the two or three played.

Format

The tournament is modified double elimination. Each match is best 2 of 3 except the final match which is best 3 of 5.

<Insert bracket population algorithm>

For each match, the person that accumulated the greater number of points in the regular season gets to choose the machine or the play order for the first game. The other player gets this choice for the second game. The person with the greater number of points gets this choice for the third game if it is necessary.

Regular play continues until only one person has not been eliminated and another person has won their way through the loser's bracket. Then the final match is played.

Trophies & Awards

The top 3 players receive trophies to commemorate their pinball achievement.

A special trophy is given to the Most Improved player with the largest change in percentage from the previous season. This trophy may only be awarded to a player once and may not be awarded to a player that has won a 1st, 2nd, or 3rd place trophy. If the most improved player is ineligible due to these restrictions, the trophy is not awarded for that season. If there is a tie, trophies are awarded to both players. To be eligible for a Most Improved Player trophy, the player must have qualified for playoffs in the two consecutive seasons being considered.

"Replay" awards of paid up dues for the following season are given out to:

- Top regular season finisher by Points
- Playoff Champion
- Most Improved player
- Top regular season participant (if one player plays more weeks than anyone else)

Replay awards must be immediately used the following season.

Rules of Play

Our rules of play are all designed to ensure fairness of play, smoothness of play sessions, courtesy to others, and respect for the pinball machines.

Payment for Games

Each player is responsible for paying for their own games.

When free games are already on the machine or a multiple game purchase discount (3 games normally \$0.75ea for \$2) is in effect, it is recommended that the group share in the benefit. Players that always try to take advantage of these discounts over others will probably have their tires slashed.

Warm-up Games

When it is possible to arrive at the league location before the 8pm match start time, warm-up games can be played on any allowed machine.

When the person running the league night (the President or their delegate) finishes assigning people to groups and declares the start of league play all warm-up play on the machines must stop immediately, regardless of the status of gameplay.

Once league play has begun, only match games may be played on the machines until **all** groups have finished with the machine. Then the machine is considered open for play.

Machines that are open for non-league play may only be played if the play does not interfere with league play.

Number of Balls Played

Generally, machines selected for league play are set for 3-ball games.

When a machine is set for 5-ball play, a determination is made at the start of league play as to how many balls will be played.

Extra balls are never played.

Balls that are not played are to be plunged by the player. One "FLIP" is allowed after the ball is launched and play ends when the ball drains for the final time.

A FLIP is defined as the movement of one flipper from its lowered position to its raised position.

These rules have some interesting ramifications, some of which are noted here:

- Flippers may be FLIPPED as many times as desired prior to the launch of the ball. For example, this may be used to adjust the position of a lit rollover lane.
- Flippers may be raised and held in the raised position while the ball is launched, then lowered and one flipper FLIPPED. For example a player can initiate a super skill shot on Attack From Mars and then flip at the ball.
- A plunge or subsequent FLIP that successfully initiates a video mode will allow the video mode to be fully played.
- A ball can be fully played with the magna-flippers on Twilight Zone.
- A spider selection can be made on Scared Stiff.
- A ball in play can be nudged (as allowed by these rules) to score points.

When league is running on time and no groups are waiting for a machine, it is permissible to play a very good game to conclusion. This is done by asking your fellow group members and whomever is in charge of keeping things moving along if they mind and if not, then your end of third ball score is recorded and you can play any additional extra balls to try and set the high score on the machine.

Nudging, Tilting, and Abuse

Skillful nudging of a pinball machine is part of standard pinball play. In general the tilt mechanisms in the machine are responsible for enforcing the limits of what is allowable. There are some exceptions though:

- Tilting so forcibly that the subsequent player receives tilt warnings is not allowed. In this case, the player may choose to continue with their game as is or have the offending player buy them another game to be used instead at the conclusion of the current game. If the player chooses to play a new game, that score is the one recorded, **even if it is lower than the original game**. The offending player receives 0 points for that game instead of the 1,2, 3, or 4 they would normally receive based on their scoring performance.
- Tilting so forcibly that the subsequent player's ball is tilted before they step up to the machine is not allowed and the responsible player's game will be voided and they will receive 0 points for that game.

- A SLAM Tilt is never allowed and the responsible player's game will be voided and they will receive 0 points for that game.

- Any maneuver that causes damage to a machine is not allowed (excepting normal wear and tear). A person that intentionally damages a machine through dangerous play may be suspended from league play.

- Bang Backs and Death Saves are not allowed and the player's game will be voided and they will receive 0 points. No similar moves that cause a drained ball to be recovered are allowed either. If a ball returns to play through no direct action of the player it will be allowed. It is also allowable on any game that provides a specific recovery mechanism, through that recovery mechanism. For example a kickback or the special switches on Wheel of Fortune.

Other players affected by these actions may be offered the opportunity to keep their current score, play an additional ball (by fully playing a collected extra ball or by starting a new game afterward and adding the first balls score to their previous score), or replay their entire game. The simplest and fairest solution to all should prevail.

Adverse Stuck Balls

On occasion a ball may become stuck in some location in a pinball machine. An experienced player will allow a ball search to attempt to clear the stuck ball before attempting a clearing maneuver.

When in a location that has keys to a machine, the player may request that the ball be cleared by opening the playfield glass. The ball should be placed in the shooter lane if possible, or on an upraised flipper, or lastly in another playfield location where the ball will not immediately drain, but will not significantly enhance a player's scoring position.

When in a location where the machine may not be opened, it is the player's responsibility to clear the ball through (careful) nudging. If this tilts out their ball, so be it. If the ball cannot be cleared by any means then the machine is considered to have malfunctioned. See rules for malfunctions.

Beneficial Stuck Balls

This type of stuck ball occurs during multiball play where one or more balls become stuck. This creates an advantageous situation for the player where they have fewer balls to manage and an easier time of scoring.

This is perfectly legal in the following situations:

- Skill was used to trap the ball in a playfield location. For example when destroying a saucer on AFM a skilled player could trap a ball behind the rising 3-bank shield.

- The ball is stopped in a playfield location that is readily accessible to other balls in play. For example a ball may come to rest atop a lane divider. This ball would be dislodged when another ball entered the same area and knocked it.

It is illegal to continue play when a ball is stuck in a place inaccessible to other balls or otherwise stuck in a non-legally defined way. Examples:

- a ball trapped under a slingshot that passed through a weak rubber ring
- a ball that accidentally ends up back in a manual shooter lane or a ball in an automatic shooter lane that has trouble putting the ball into play must be plunged

As soon as this situation is noticed by the player or any other observers, the player should attempt to get the other balls under control and then go through the ball unsticking process. If this is not possible, a ruling should be requested.

Knowingly exploiting a machine with an illegally stuck ball is unfair, discourteous and just plain bad form and may be punished at the President's discretion.

Machine Failures

Pinball machines are complicated mechanical beasts. Sometimes a problem just happens that prevents play from continuing. In these cases the machine is eliminated from competition and a replacement is selected. A group in the middle of play will restart their games on the replacement machine with no scoring or achievement on the failed machine being retained. Sorry dude. Groups that already finished their games before the machine failure will keep their scores and results. Groups that have not played the failed machine will play the replacement machine instead.

NOTE: A single ball ending malfunction is just considered bad luck, not a machine failure.

Rulings

Where a decision on how to resolve an issue can be agreed on by the group playing the game, this decision should be used. When no agreement can be reached, the league President will make a FINAL ruling.

The league President is responsible for all rulings except:

- when they are involved in the game in question
- when they are directly affected by the ruling
- when they are not present

In these cases, the ruling should be made by the person running league in the absence of the President or a person pre-approved by the President to make such rulings.

Organization

Members in good standing

BAPA membership is open to all non-assholes.

BAPA members in good standing are current on their dues and are neither suspended nor banned.

Officers

BAPA has one elected officer position, President.

The President is responsible for the proper operation of the league and enforcement of league rules. The President makes decisions as prescribed by the rules. Feedback from Members should be obtained before making any major changes or decisions. Significant rules changes should be put to a vote of Members in good standing to gauge member sentiment.

The President may appoint other BAPA members in good standing to handle portions of their responsibility as they see fit.

Elections

New candidates for the office of President must declare their intent to run 30 days prior to the end of the current season. In addition candidates must meet the following qualifications:

- Candidates must be a BAPA member in good standing.
- Candidates must be active league members, qualifying for playoffs the previous 3 seasons.

In the event that there are no candidates for the office of President, the incumbent President retains the office.

Elections are held no more than once per year.

Finances

Each season league dues are collected. League dues are \$30. Currently league dues have been reduced to \$20 to reduce our surplus a bit.

League dues are waived for:

- The winner of the previous regular season.
- The winner of the previous playoffs.
- The person with the most weeks played if no one is tied with them.
- In special cases at the President's discretion.

A player may only take advantage of one of these discounts and only for the following season.

Dues are used for the operational expenses of the league including, but not limited to, the following:

- Playoff facility rental
- Trophies
- Purchase of Fred Steak
- Drinks and tableware for playoffs
- Supplies
- Web hosting and domain registration fees

BAPA Websites

<http://bayareapinball.org/>

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/bapamembers/>

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/bapa/> (Still around but deprecated)

<http://www.google.com/calendar/ical/mf87hafe53hpudgbtsaopnn54k%40group.calendar.google.com/private-65b5626724461de6698f204f47e2e68f/basic.ics>

Other Key Pinball Things

WPPR & PARS

WPPR – World Pinball Player Ranking <http://www.ifpabinball.com/>

PARS – PAPA Advanced Rating System <http://papa.org/pars/>

PAPA – Professional & Amateur Pinball Association <http://papa.org/>

The best analogy to think of WPPR and PARS is to look at professional golf.

WPPR = equivalent to "money leaders" = Measures tournament success, and because it's cumulative, it is very much influenced by the number of big tournaments the player was invited to play in.

PARS = equivalent to "handicap" = Measures relative skill between players, attempts to predict which player is better/worse than another player, without being strictly a measure of tournament success.

So, a "sleeper" player, who is a very good player but never shows up to tournaments, will have a strong PARS but weak WPPR.

Conversely, a player who has more money than skill, and has the means to attend as many tournaments as possible, will have a strong WPPR but weak PARS.

The best players will have both strong PARS and strong WPPR.

WPPR rankings are all about playing in IFPA sanctioned events, whether they be our league playoffs, Jonny's and other local tourneys, or "major" events like the California Extreme tournament.

PARS is all about how often you play and if it's recorded. You can even set up your own PARS matches and submit the results if you want to.

Glossary

References

*1 <http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2003/02/05/FD122380.DTL>

*2 http://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/Cookbook:Fred_Steak_Marinade
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Fred_steak.jpg#filelinks

Deprecated Rules

These are rules that for one reason or another are no longer used.

Machine Selection

When a location has more than 4 machines, the set of machines used for league play is determined by a voting + randomization process.

Each person playing that week votes for the 4 machines they'd like to play. We currently use an online system to sign players in and let them vote for eligible machines. Once all votes are in the system assigns weights to the machines based on the number of votes they've received and then randomly selects machines from the weighted pool.

This rule was deprecated when we changed rules to allow more than 4 league machines to better accommodate more players at league nights.

Points

In the event that a group does not have 4 players, the median score of all league games played on a machine that week is substituted for missing players. Then the top scorer, including the median as the missing players, gets 4 points, the next 3, then 2, and the lowest scorer receives 1 point. Ties between players and median are settled in the player's favor.

For example, for a group of 3 players playing Twilight Zone, if the median score was 100M, player 1 scored 125M, player 2 scored 25M, and player 3 scored 100M, the results would be:

Player 1 - 4 points

Player 2 - 1 point

Player 3 - 3 points (tie goes to the player)

This rule was deprecated when we changed rules to allow more than 4 league machines and there was no longer a significant median score.

Number of Balls Played

It is general practice to play all 5 balls on EM machines and only play 3 balls on solid state or modern machines.

This rule was deprecated since we now are able to play more than 4 machines, significantly speeding up play.