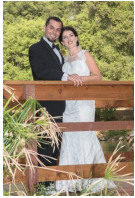




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Ramona Pool Leagues — A Community Of Fun



League pool is popular in Ramona.

By Angela McLaughlin - Ramona Home Journal • Thu, Aug 10, 2017

The crack of a pool cue against the ball echoes in the room as everyone holds their breath, awaiting the outcome. A rousing cheer from teammates greets one of the players — the game has officially begun.

It's one-on-one, and the anticipation and desire for a win are palpable. Strong bonds and camaraderie form between teammates as a night of fun, laughter and competition ensues.

Pool is popularly played throughout the country, on household tables, and in bars and other venues. A competitive sport or a leisurely activity, it appeals to a wide range of people of different skill levels.

Two pool leagues operate in Ramona, offering residents the chance to get involved in something different.

American Poolplayers Association

The American Poolplayers Association (APA) is a national organization that offers two different leagues in town: 8-ball and 9-ball. According to the APA, there are currently six 8-ball teams and six 9-ball teams in Ramona.

But Ramona has the potential to host up to 12 teams on each league.

"Teams must have a minimum of five players and may have up to eight," says Jill Frankland, league operator for San Diego APA. For information about the league, check out the APA website at www.poolplayers.com.

"While some leagues require you to be able to jump the cue ball, bank it off three rails and sink the 8-ball blindfolded, playing and competing on a team in the APA pool leagues is much less demanding," says Frankland. "Having fun, meeting new people and playing pool is what the APA is all about."

She adds that interested parties need not be pool sharks, as the APA utilizes a handicap system that allows novice players to play against better-skilled opponents, with the ability to still win points for their team.

As a large league, APA also gives players a chance to play in competitions outside of Ramona. Local teams compete in playoffs for the opportunity to attend larger competitions.

"Sixty-four 8-ball teams and 65 9-ball teams from San Diego County earned the right to compete in the 2017 San Diego APA City Championships in June to attempt to qualify for the 2017 APA World Championships," says Frankland.

Aside from potential monetary winnings, teams may receive trophies, travel assistance and paid entry to certain events — not to mention bragging rights.

"We love to have fun, and that's what we focus on in the APA, while also offering dedicated pool players lots of opportunities for challenging competition!"

Billiard Congress of America

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The Billiard Congress of America Pool League (BCAPL or BCA), now owned by CueSports International, is an organization that unites independent leagues around the world, allowing a league operator to sanction each league to be part of a larger organization.

The BCA league operators of Ramona are Henry Preciado and Jerry Patenude.

According to Preciado, there are currently eight BCA teams in Ramona who compete in 8-ball, with the potential for up to 12. Each week, four players per team compete, so he recommends having at least five players on a team to account for illness, vacations, etc.

"Billiard Congress of America is the standard that defines professional pool from amateur pool," Preciado says. "We put a lot of emphasis on players perfecting their skill set."

Those interested in joining a BCA team may contact Preciado at 858-663-4416.

"The players we have now are serious about improving their game," says Preciado. "I am always looking for new players to balance the teams out."

Teams may be eligible to play in state and regional events, as well as the BCAPL National Championships, which they have dubbed, "The greatest pool tournament in the world!"

He adds that joining a team is a great way to "develop talent and have an opportunity to compete with the pros."

When and Where?

Each league plays once a week in the evening — APA 8-ball on Mondays, APA 9-ball on Tuesdays, and BCA 8-ball on Wednesdays.

League nights are hosted at several locations in town, including Way Point Saloon, Cheers of Ramona, The Turkey Inn and VFW Post 3783. Every team has a "home" bar, and the location of the matches rotates weekly.

Why Pool?

Players of varying ages and skill levels may enjoy picking up a stick and learning the tricks of the trade. A fun way to meet people and learn a new talent — and a great way to regularly socialize — pool can bring an appealing diversity to life.

Local Ramona resident Tara Jorde has been playing league pool for six years. Though she originally got into the sport because of her husband, she keeps playing because she loves it.

"I enjoy the competition and the people," she says.

It may seem a little nerve-wracking at first, but finding the right team and support system in the pool world makes all the difference.

People new to the sport of pool need not be intimidated, as many seasoned players enjoy sharing their knowledge and coaching new players.

"Your teammates will help you," says Andy McLaughlin, who plays APA 9-ball. "If you don't know the rules, they'll help you understand. They'll help you with your shots. Everyone is there to have fun, not to judge. You're there to have fun, and at the same time, you can become a better player."

Those interested in the competition side of it may find the leagues to be an appealing way to advance their skills.

"My favorite part is playing other people that are interested and serious about the game of pool," says local 9-ball player Jesse Richard. "It definitely helps progress your game — especially seeing the different styles. It's a game that can be played with different strategies."

It's not all about the competition. Many people who join leagues love the comradeship that develops among teammates.

Tanner Long has been playing pool since he was five years old, but has only been playing on leagues for the past year and a half. A Ramona native, he says he always has a good time on league nights.

"I would encourage others, because it's a fun way to go out and meet other people around town," Long says. Jorde adds, "I love my pool family tremendously. I've met so many great people."

So, the next time you are looking for something new to try, pick up that stick and give it a go — you may enjoy it more than you realize, and perhaps your new hobby is waiting just around the corner.

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