

TAP LAS VEGAS AND THE 2010 YOUTH POOL PLAYERS OF VEGAS

by Cynthia Chappell, January 20, 2010

What do these boys have in common? They are all teenagers who compete in the TAP Las Vegas pool league at the Las Vegas Cue Club & Mickey's Cues & Brews. They all started at a beginner level of a handicap 2 and have excelled from there. They have been coached and taught to play by their fellow pool players, which include parents, grandparents and other mentors and now they sometimes teach us.

Pool league provides these kids with a sport they enjoy and are excelling in. They get to spend time with both their peers and some of the adults who inspire them to become successful. It gives them the opportunity to have fun, learn, meet new people, socialize and compete in a safe environment.

You might have thought that pool could only be played by adults due to age limitations set forth by the pool halls, bars and leagues. The doors have been opened for the youths of Vegas!



(L-R) Michael Erle, Nick Nowlan, John Leafdale, Nick Vece and Ricky Langston

TAP Las Vegas is a local pool league and a part of a national pool league, The Association for Pool (T.A.P.). TAP Las Vegas provides all age weekly league play at the Las Vegas Cue Club and Mickey's Cues & Brews, for the Academic Billiard Collective in area high schools, league-wide tournaments and special open tournaments for youths in Las Vegas. T.A.P. provides a computerized nationwide handicap system (PoolNet) allowing kids of all ages to compete against other players of all ages at their same skill level. Handicaps can range from 2 to 7.

The kids in TAP Las Vegas can even go on to compete in upper level tournaments! Since TAP League has no minimum age requirement for the members, these kids will be able to compete at Nationals. TAP Nationals will be held at Bally's on The Strip in Las Vegas in November of 2010 and 2011, giving the kids of Clark County the opportunity to compete on a national level. These kids will compete against other players of all ages who are at their same skill level and will have as much of a chance at winning as every other competitor!

Both nationally and locally, TAP has been working with the Academic Billiard Collective (ABC) to provide free league play for the high school students of Clark County since 2008. T.A.P. waives all associated membership and weekly league fees and TAP Las Vegas (the local Las Vegas league) and its players donate their time to teach the kids and organize weekly league.

ABC is a local non-profit billiard organization run by Bradley Combs, a school teacher and billiard club advisor in Indian Springs. ABC has a goal of giving these kids something constructive to do after school by providing them with the opportunity to learn to play pool and compete in league. They organize tournament fund raisers with the pool halls and canvas the community for table and billiard equipment donations to place at various high schools in Clark County. They encourage the kids to do well in school by setting minimum academic standards and give them something to do after school.

As for places to play in Vegas, the Las Vegas Cue Club, Mickey's Cues and Brews and Pool Sharks are 3 of the main pool halls who open their doors to all ages. These pool halls provide a safe environment for the kids to compete and excel in the sport of billiards. Thankfully, they have all donated table time to ABC and TAP Las Vegas for pool league and youth tournaments.

Here is a little closer look at the 2010 TAP Las Vegas Youth of Vegas...



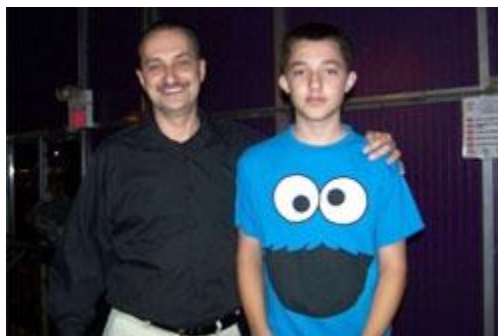
Michael Erle attends Cheyenne High School. He started playing pool about 3 years ago after visiting family in Puerto Rico and playing pool for the first time. After returning from his vacation, he worked with his dad to find a place where they could



start playing. They found the Cue Club. In June 2009, they joined the league after learning about TAP League. He started as a skill level 2 for two short weeks and quickly excelled to a skill level 3. Michael and Brian are a part of the team, Not Close who came in 2nd place in the Fall 2009 session. Michael mostly enjoys the strategy in pool, learning how to control the table and of course, spending time with his dad.



Nick Nowlan is a middle school student in Las Vegas at Harney Middle School. He started playing pool with his dad, Yvon Nowlan, a couple of years ago. He joined the league in May, 2009 playing on Slice and Dice and has taken 1st place for 2 consecutive



sessions! Nick loves playing, enjoying both the competitive structure and social aspect of pool league and spending time with his dad. Nick has excelled from a skill level 2 to a 4 in less than a year. They both enjoy the local league tournaments and are both looking forward to competing in the Vegas Masters national qualifier and National tournaments at Bally's and hope to have a place for their team to compete in the 8-ball team tournament.

For John Leafdale, it all started at Chaparral High School about 1 ½ years ago. In 2008, he joined the Chaparral Billiards Club ran by Robert LaPlante. In conjunction with the Billiards Club, he joined the Academic Billiard Collective and the TAP Las Vegas pool league. In 2009, John joined the Las Vegas Cue

Club In-House division of TAP Las Vegas. Pool has become a passion for John and he has quickly excelled to a skill level 4. No matter how hectic his schedule gets, John never misses a week of pool at the Las Vegas Cue Club or a league tournament. His most exciting session thus far, was the Fall of 2009. The Vegas Stokers team held first place for several weeks and ended in 4th place. John mostly enjoys the skill of the game and loves playing the high ranked players. John is a senior at Chaparral High School and will be graduating in June of 2010. He joined the United States Army and will be off to Fort Benning, Georgia for basic training just after graduation. He will be deployed soon after to Afghanistan to defend our country. We wish



him the very best.

Nick Vece attends Durango High School in Las Vegas. He has played pool with his grandpa, John Vece since a very early age. Over the past 7 years, he has come to many of the league parties.



Before playing pool with us, he would watch, learn and enter the charity raffles. We were always amazed at how many of his tickets would be drawn. He was always a winner. Nick joined the Vegas Stokers with his grandpa John in September 2008 as a skill level 2. Since then, he has



developed a good stroke, moved up to a skill level 3 and competes in the league tournaments. Nick enjoys the new challenge he gets to experience every week, meeting new people and spending time with his grandpa.

For Ricky Langston, his earliest memory of playing pool was at age 5. It all started at a local pool hall with grandpa. He's played ever since. Ricky also joined John at Chapparral High School in 2008 and TAP's Vegas Stokers in 2009. Ricky has excelled to a skill level 3. He has learned quite a bit over the past 1 ½ years. Rarely missing a week of pool or a tournament, he really enjoys the social aspect of league and has fun playing. He is a very positive force for the team. Ricky graduated in June 2009 and is now working as a Soundboard Operator for a local talk radio station and enjoys his Monday nights playing pool.



There are a few ways you can get involved with the youths of Vegas and help to inspire them as they grow into adulthood. They are our future. If you are a parent, grandparent, God parent, aunt, uncle, etc. with a child who enjoys the game and you would like to inspire and spend time with, you can join us for league play on Monday nights at the Las Vegas Cue Club and Mickey's Cues & Brews. In conjunction with the Academic Billiard Collective, TAP is seeking volunteers to work with the kids during league play at area high schools. Along with the ABC and individually, the schools accept donations of billiard equipment and cash to support their billiard clubs. For more information about these opportunities, please contact me at the TAP Las Vegas pool league at 702-558-7665.

