

Captains Training 101

Welcome,

Hey!

Hello!

It's really good to have you! I'm so excited to bring to you the very first formal training course for Captains, and I literally can't wait to get at it. So let's dive right in and ask the first question: What does a Captain do?

Great question! It's one I wish someone had asked me when I started. Instead, I was thrown into the role like a surprise party—without the cake! I wasn't expected to be a superstar, just “adequate” (whatever that means). And, boy, little did anyone know the whirlwind that was about to hit!

As a first-time Captain, without any real training, I realised very quickly that you have no idea what the position is until you are one, and as a first-time president, I had no idea what the role was until ...

WHOA!

... and here we are, training Captains!

It was a wake-up call for me, and as a league, we needed change!

I was immediately tossed into some eye-opening situations. Situations that prompted me to want to reach out to others so they could learn about their roles, it was getting to be fifty shades of grey around here, and I'm not talking handcuffs, whips, and chains!

Very few of us know what to do at all!

Sure, we have people who have been captains for a VERY long time. I'm one of them. We were simply skipping - la ti da - through the same thing year after year and thinking everything is A OK.

However, it's not A OK and there is so much fog that if a real crisis were to happen, not one of our Captains is ready to handle it.

So while I was going through some situations and was hating the position I took on, I had to stop and wonder why this was happening.

And now, I'm glad I took the role of president because it has given me the opportunity to drag our league kicking and screaming into the modern era—the post-Millennial, Gen Z, Gen A, Gen B, and beyond era, and it has given me reason to launch this course. So, you are all now a petri dish in my lab of experimentation.

But ... I digress.

So, what does it really mean to be a Captain or Co-Captain?

First and foremost, you are a leader! You're a volunteer, a guiding star for your team, and an essential part of our league. Without you, we don't have a league! That's why we took the “spot” ownership away from the venues and

handed it over to the captains—so your team is truly YOUR team. You call the shots, set the vibe, and run the show, all while adhering to the league rules (because, let's be honest, we all need some structure to keep things fun).

You have the power to hire and fire whenever you see fit (within reason). You'll have a voice not just within your team but across the entire league. So, in short, you are the BIG CHEESE! And if there's anything I've learned, it's that cheese makes everything better!

Captain/Co-Captain Responsibilities

****Your Team – The Reason You Get Up Every Morning****

First things first, your main gig is looking out for your team! They're counting on you for guidance—unless you're one of the lucky ones with a mentor (if you have one of those, I'm seriously jealous!). You are the captain or co-captain, which means when the going gets tough, it's all on you. If things go sideways, don't worry! Just put on your best superhero cape and save the day!

I know this next part sounds like a really bad joke and so very corporate, but a really good start to helping your team is to direct everyone to the website, including yourself. The executive has spent tireless hours creating a space that holds everything you need to run a successful campaign in this league, and we are adding to it all the time as we learn and grow.

****The League – The Glue That Binds****

We hold the prestigious title of being the number 1 league in the region. We are the first place new people look to for a dart experience, and it's for a good reason! Without our fantastic league, you'd have nowhere to strut your stuff or test your dart-throwing prowess against other teams also trying to show their best stuff. We provide the essential framework: rules, schedules, an executive team to keep chaos at bay, shiny trophies, a grand banquet, and above all, our unwavering support (and maybe a little bit of love, too).

****The Venue – The Place Where It All Goes Down****

Let's talk about the venue. It comes in third on your list of priorities. Sure, it gives you a space to showcase your dart skills, but remember:

1. We supply the money week after week for these places; they are not as good without us as they are with us.
2. They may never cover your fees and can kick you to the curb if something flashier comes along.

I know it sounds cynical, but it's true. I was a very large advocate of preserving our venues, and I still am, but WE also have value, and that needs to be respected.

For example, we nurtured a fantastic venue relationship for over a decade — We had 2 teams there, they paid the fees, we were considered when they moved their business to an alternate building, we were promised our own dart room, we were on a first name basis with ownership, we were invited to play in their annual golf tournament, it was truly a great relationship! But, as they say, “business is business,” and one year, we found ourselves squeezed out like a tube of toothpaste. Every week, we had less and less room to play, literally. Eventually, one team had had enough, and they went elsewhere. There was sweet little room to play and a huge lack of respect for us and our guests. At the end of the season, we took the league spot, packed our bags, found a new home, and demonstrated that we can be a moving target (pun intended) if required. They lost two league spots, a ton of business, and free advertising. Loyalty to a point. It's not everything ... especially when it's turned around on you.

Cue the basics.

****The Night – What To Expect Every Single Week****

- (i) Each night kicks off with a draw! You'll have a roster, and you will need either a deck of cards or something that can be shuffled. I've seen cool satchels with poker chips that make you feel like a pro. If you have tech-savvy teammates or you are a device wiz yourself, a randomizer app on a phone can work wonders too!
- (ii) Don't forget your dart score sheets! These handy forms are available on our website under the “Forms” tab, along with your high out and 180 sheets. Essentials brought to you by the league.
- (iii) Everyone plays, so make sure you have a minimum of eight players ready to let out some pent-up energy on an unsuspecting dartboard.
- (iv) Encourage everyone to keep score! Not only will it lighten your load, but they'll also learn a thing or two—scorekeeping is a skill in itself! There may be some pushback in the beginning, but they will thank you for being a Debbie Downer in the long run.
- (v) Brush up on the league rules and dart etiquette found on our website. Knowing these will help you navigate any tricky situations and give you the backbone you need if a heated debate breaks out! Remember, you're a player too—so let's keep it friendly!
- (vi) Monday nights are executive-free zones, which means if any issues pop up, you're the fearless leader until Tuesday. But hey, if the police show up, you might want to drop me a quick text—not that I'm overly dramatic or anything!

****The Grind: Your Darting Adventure Awaits!****

Welcome to the world of darts, where every match is an opportunity for fun, camaraderie, and a bit of friendly competition! As your head host, I will say that you're about to embark on a thrilling 6-month journey filled with excitement.

Allow me to toss out a challenge. Let's try something new. Take pictures! Every Monday you can appoint a different photographer! It's a long season; it may be the only way to remember it all.

****Host Responsibilities: Did Anyone Clean the Bathroom?!****

1. ****Get the Venue Ready:**** Arrive early and transform your space into a darting paradise! Make sure the dartboards are open, the lights are on, and any chairs or tables are set up just right. If you've got chalk, have it handy and in its place!
2. ****Warm Welcomes:**** Greet your guests with a smile! They're not just players; they're your friends, sharing in your love for the game. Show them some hospitality!
3. ****Run the Show:**** Take charge of the evening! Start the draw, post the matches, and set the order for play. Don't forget to record the scores—keeping track of those thrilling finishes is crucial!
4. ****Farewell & Thanks:**** As the night comes to a close, bid your guests adieu and thank them for joining you, for their presence makes your house feel full and welcoming!
5. ****Clean Up:**** Let's keep the good vibes going and your venue ecstatic!—tidy up after the matches! Return tables and chairs to their original spots and give them a big thank you for having you and letting you host.
6. ****Score It Online:**** Make sure to enter those match scores online to keep everything official!
7. ****Prep for Next Week:**** Recharge and get ready for next week!

****Visitor Responsibilities: DO I bring wine or flowers?!****

1. ****Show Up on Time:**** Be punctual! Arrive and make sure you have your team with you!
2. ****Be Gracious:**** Remember, you're a guest in someone else's home. Bring your best manners and positive energy!

3. ****Participate in the Draw:**** This is your chance to get involved and make the night even more exciting. It's also the only way to make matches, so you really don't have a choice.

4. ****Record Your Scores:**** Make sure to log your scores online—it keeps the competition lively!

5. ****Get Ready for Next Week:**** Keep the enthusiasm going as you prepare for the next match!

****18 + Weeks of Darting Bliss!****

Fast forward 18 weeks through a whirlwind of darting action, like the matrix or hyperspace. You may feel a mix of exhaustion and thrill. However, you might just be craving more! At that point, in my humble opinion, you are insane.

Year Milestone Recap:

1. ****AGM (Annual General Meeting):**** Mark your calendars for the first Tuesday of September! Your team must be represented. By now, you should have a full team ready to rumble and take no prisoners! If you do your research, you will be ready.

**** Pro Tip**** I field all the incoming requests to join this league. I point them all to the summer tournaments that our treasurer runs on Monday nights. If you're looking for players ... No brainer right?

2. ****Schedule Release:**** Game schedules come out quickly after the AGM, so mid - late September it's go-time! Share the schedule with your venue—they'll appreciate being in the loop.

3. ****Final Rosters Due:**** Make sure all names are submitted by January 1.

4. ****Playoffs Kick Off:**** At the end of March, playoffs will lead to an exciting finale! Gather your team player and guest counts for the banquet, and be sure to collect ticket money. Tickets will be distributed at the singles tournament, the week prior to the playoffs.

5. ****Playoff Format:**** Brace yourself for a round-robin showdown, typically lasting 2-3 weeks depending on your division.

6. ****Winning Teams:**** If your team claims the division title, double-check that your roster has all names spelled correctly for the awards—it's time to shine!

7. ****Banquet Celebration:**** Get pumped for a grand celebration! Bond and party with your league mates—it's the perfect way to cap the season!

****Captain's Supply List - Your Darting Essentials!****

As the captain, you have some fun gear to bring along every dart night:

****A Binder:**** Keep everything organized with three-ring-lined paper.

****Pens:**** Stock up on pens—because you can never have enough!

****Drawing Materials:**** Depending on your preferences, carry extra cards and a permanent marker for quick adjustments.

****Score Sheets:**** Have a stash of score sheets for the current and previous seasons; they'll come in handy!

****Extras:**** Bring along extra chalk, schedules, and flights. Be prepared for anything—you're not just a captain but a friendly ambassador of the game!

****Your Darts:**** Last but certainly not least—don't forget your trusty darts!

OK, you've waded your way through Captain/Co-Captain Training 101, and now we are about to dive into the stuff no one wants to talk about.

Welcome to what I believe is the essential section of our curriculum!

Captain/Co-Captain Training 201

Yes, I know, the initial reaction might be, "Wait, what's this all about? This is all so new and, honestly, a bit bizarre." But trust me, this is the stuff we desperately needed years ago. It might seem like a huge leap into the unknown, but that's exactly why we're here—because nobody wants to face unexpected chaos unprepared!

Think about it: if we had something like this when previous situations reared their ugly heads, things might have gone a lot smoother. Thankfully, many of the situations below haven't happened yet, but we need to be ready just in case they do! Sometimes, I wonder how the league overlooked these critical issues for so long. We let down Players, Captains, and the Executives who had to deal with shit like this, but hey, we are here and ready to discover. They say hindsight is 20/20, and we are moving forward, right?

****The Unmentionables – Like A Redheaded Stepchild****

So, what are the "unmentionables"?

Great question!

Picture this: someone gets hurt during a game, the power goes out, there's a fire in the kitchen, or, heaven forbid, the police show up.

These are the scenarios everyone nervously tiptoes around until they actually happen.

The truth is, you might find yourself navigating any of these situations while wearing your captain's hat. How you handle them will not only shape your reputation as a league officer but also impact how you feel about yourself.

Let's be real for a moment: are you the cool cucumber who stays calm under pressure or the person who fumbles around like a cat in a bathtub? Are you the type who can take charge, or do you freeze like a deer in headlights?

Yes, I see you raising your eyebrows! "But wait, this is just a recreational league!"

While that's true, managing even a rec league isn't *just* about fun and games. It's also about responsibility. We've been around for decades, and we will be around for decades more, but the world outside changes fast. Today, people are more aware of their rights than ever, and they aren't afraid to use them. So, even if a situation seems the same as it did five or ten years ago, we need to change the way we handle it to avoid the fallout that could land you and me in hot water!

****You're in Charge!****

As the Captain or the Co-Captain, you are responsible for your roster, and that's a big responsibility. So let's tackle a few hypothetical situations together:

Let's start off nice and easy with a quick one that should ease us in a bit.

****The Power Goes Out During a Thunderstorm****

I bet all the young ones scramble for their phones like they were gold nuggets!

"No worries! I brought a flashlight!"

"Crisis averted—well, at least until the battery runs out!"

Just what we need: a thrilling round of "Dodge the Dart."

Someone's about to win the "Eye Patch of the Year" award!

Cue the ambulance—and maybe an optometrist!

How about something you can't fix with your phone?

****A kitchen fire during darts:**** Cue panic! Where do you run? Can you lead the escape? What essentials do you grab—your darts or the fire extinguisher? Can you keep your cool and help others? What's the aftermath like, and how will the league handle it?

Ok, something a little more challenging.

****Someone is way too drunk and is causing a scene:**** Oh boy! What's the protocol here? How did we let it get this far? Who needs to be involved? Who's affected? And seriously, what's the fallout, and how does the league respond?

Here's a tricky scenario.

****A theft involving one of your players:**** Yikes! Who do you reach out to first? What's your game plan? Who's impacted, and what are the potential consequences? What does the league do?

Ok, how about this ...

****A fistfight in the parking lot:**** Where do we even start? How did we go from cheering for awesome throws to throwing down in the parking lot? Did someone forget their adulting skills? Were the police called? Who's affected here, and what happens next? And most importantly, how on earth does the league respond?

Sure, we can only cover so many wild scenarios, and there might be things that crop up while we're lounging at a seemingly innocent game of darts on a random Monday. Who knew it could be so chaotic?
That's why we have Captains and Co-Captains because Iron Man can't be everywhere at once.

****Final Thoughts:****

Remember, we aren't perfect, and the answers aren't written in stone.
We aren't lawyers (that would be a fun twist though!).
We aren't the police (unless you count our impressive ability to diffuse drama).
We don't own these establishments. (but DAYUM we sure do know how to have fun!)

****Here's what we do have****

Common sense. And if you wield your common sense like a superhero, you can turn potentially bad situations into positive outcomes!
Here's to being the captain of chaos and navigating storms with a smile (and maybe a good sense of humour) along the way!