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AfterWork: Classic Q in Newport Beach

'The Q' is more than the
sum of its 45 televisions and
9 pool tables.

By **BARRY KOLTNOW**

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Imagine the perfect storm for sports bars.

First, it's raining outside, and everybody knows that bad weather dampens business. People are reluctant to leave the house when the forecast offers nothing but dire warnings.

Second, the Lakers are not on TV. The home team always draws a crowd.

Third, there are no good games at all on TV because it's basketball season, and the NBA is on its All-Star Game break.

That was the perfect storm faced by the Classic Q on a recent Friday night.

Interestingly, bar owner Ronnie Lutfi was unusually calm for a bar owner in the middle of a perfect storm.

"It's going to be slower than it would be if the Lakers were on tonight, but I'm not worried. People come here for a lot of reasons other than sports on TV."

In fact, "the Q," as it has been known in these parts for nearly 18 years, had a pretty good crowd for what should have been a sports-bar nightmare.

I found people who were mildly interested in what was on the 45 television screens. The best thing going was a Harlem Globetrotters exhibition, and that is about as exciting as a Washington Generals highlight reel. A number of people were busy at the bar's nine pool tables, and still others were throwing darts. Nobody seemed very interested in the video golf game or Texas Hold 'Em machine on the night I was there. A sizable group was on the outdoor patio (it's covered) where they smoked, sipped cocktails and engaged in lively conversation.

One young man, accompanied by two buddies from work, put it simply: "I don't care what's on TV; we just came in to hang out."

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