

**NASPA**

Official  
Tournament  
Rules



# NASPA

# Official

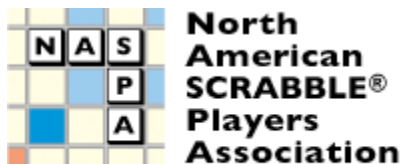
# Tournament

# Rules

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*Making words, building friendships*

Dallas • Toronto

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# I. Conduct

All players are encouraged to play with a spirit of fun, guided by a sense of fairness.

Conduct at North American SCRABBLE® Players Association (NASPA) tournaments is subject to the terms of the *Code of Conduct* at the NASPA website.

The inappropriate practices described in this section WILL NOT BE TOLERATED.

## I.A. Cheating and Collusion

All players are honor-bound not to cheat. Purposefully attempting to lose a game, or to score fewer points in a game in order to benefit another person, is collusion.

Directors will immediately, but discreetly, investigate suspected cheating or collusion. Players caught cheating or colluding will be immediately ejected and disqualified from the event, and subject to further penalties as detailed in the *Code of Conduct*. Any discussion that takes place after the game has ended about whether to recount is not collusion.

## I.B. Resigning

Except as specified below, resigning a game or quitting a tournament in progress are considered unsportsmanlike and subject to penalty unless approved by the Director for a medical or personal emergency. (See “*V.K. Forfeits and Byes*” on page 28.) “Tanking” a game by repeated passing or otherwise deliberately playing in an exaggeratedly poor manner is also subject to penalty.

*Exception:* The Director may allow a resignation option in any tournament where spreads and scores are totally irrelevant and where the Director has clearly stated the resignation policy in all tournament announcements and flyers. Under those circumstances, a player who is obviously losing a game may, on his or her own time, request to resign. The opponent then has the choice of honoring the resignation at the current score (minus any time penalties) or requiring that the game continue.

### **I.C. Abusive or Disruptive Behavior**

Players who threaten, verbally abuse, or exhibit any seriously disruptive behavior will be penalized as detailed in the *Code of Conduct*. Players who are physically abusive will be immediately ejected and disqualified. In addition, NASPA membership may be revoked.

### **I.D. Distracting Speech or Behavior**

Inappropriate speaking, moaning, or other distractive or misleading behavior during a game is unethical. Each player has the right to ask any player to remain silent during a game except when they are quietly counting, announcing or verifying a score, holding or challenging, declaring a blank, or calling the Director. Any conversation that is not necessary for the progression of the game is distracting to your opponent and to neighboring players. Do not hesitate to ask the Director to intervene on your behalf.

### **I.E. Inappropriate Conduct While Viewing Games**

Never assume it is your right to watch games in progress (kibitzing). Respect the wishes of any player who may seem disturbed by your presence or who asks you to leave the playing area unless you have been specifically authorized by the Director to annotate the game. If you are permitted to observe a game, guard that your demeanor does not give either player valuable information about the other player's rack. *Never* look up words while watching a game. Do so only after discreetly moving out of view of either player.

### **I.F. Suspicious Behavior**

It is every player's responsibility to guard against actions which might incur suspicion or misinterpretation, and to immediately inform opponents of any such action on their part.

### **I.G. Simultaneous Games**

Playing more than one game at the same time is prohibited.

## II. General Principles

### II.A. Clock Neutralization

The clock should be stopped for scoring discrepancies, inappropriate procedures/behavior, or anytime a Director is called. While the clock is stopped, players may not track tiles, designate the blank, study either the board or their racks, or adjust the positioning of any tiles on the board (except as outlined in “III.G.4. Poorly Positioned Tiles” on page 9). Such improper adjustments may negatively affect the decision of any Director asked to adjudicate proper positioning of the tiles. DO NOT HESITATE to call the Director if a rule, procedure, or question needs clarification.

### II.B. Adjudicating Unusual Situations

Directors should keep in mind that no player should benefit from an irregularity s/he created, and no player should be harmed or potentially harmed by an irregularity s/he did not create. All players should be considered innocent of willful wrongdoing unless sufficient evidence exists to the contrary.

### II.C. Observing Infractions

Notify the relevant players or tournament staff of any rules violations or improprieties you observe in your game or in other games. For example:

1. Suggest that a player request a second opinion if you think a ruling or word adjudication is incorrect.
2. Prompt the Word Judge to check the *Long List* for words of ten or more letters.
3. If you notice a rack with more than seven tiles, existing tiles being mistakenly moved or removed from the board, or a board containing disconnected tiles, inform the players and/or the Director. (See “IV.B.5.a. Racks with More Than Seven Tiles” on page 12.)
4. Inform players of stray tiles in their area. See “IV.B.3. Loose Tiles” on page 11, and “V.C. Finding Missing Tiles Near the End of the Game” on page 25.
5. Inform the players if you notice that the clock is not running during a game in progress.

Except as noted, DO NOT inform players of other games when you notice mistakes regarding scoring or time clocks (unless the game is over and the tally slip has been signed or initialed by both players). These are the sole responsibility of the players.

## **II.D. Director's Discretion**

If a situation arises that is not explicitly covered in the rules, the Director has the discretion to extract what he or she can from the rule book to correct any irregularity in a fair and reasonable manner. The Director should keep in mind that no player should benefit from an irregularity he or she created, and the goal of any remedy should be to eliminate to the fullest extent possible the impact of the irregularity on the aggrieved player. Such situations may be reported, along with the Director's remedy, to the NASPA Rules Committee for discussion and possible inclusion in a future edition of the Rules.

## III. Beginning the Game

### III.A. Equipment

#### III.A.1. References

The *Official Tournament & Club Word List*, 2nd Edition (*OWL2*), published by Merriam-Webster, Inc, contains ALL acceptable 2- to 9- letter words and their inflections.

The *Long List* contains ALL acceptable words of ten or more letters which are not listed in the *OWL2*.

Approved Software Self-Lookup programs for adjudicating challenges are posted on the NASPA website.

#### III.A.2. Tiles

Tiles that can be distinguished by feel are not permitted, except as required by the Director for players who are blind.

Tiles that give no visual clues are preferred over those that do.

Legible tiles are preferred over significantly faded or worn tiles.

Among tiles of similar legibility, one-piece tiles are preferred over three-piece tiles (with a paper letter insert).

Tile sets must contain 100 tiles with the traditional distribution and point values that have been utilized since the game's inception. See also *Rule III.B. Confirming the Number of Tiles*, p. 7.

Adjacent games should not use identical tiles. If one game has already begun, the other game should change tiles. If neither has begun, then one player from each board draws a tile, and the player with the letter closest to Z changes tile sets. If three adjacent boards have identical tiles, and none of the games have begun, the middle board should change tiles.

### III.A.3. Clocks

Clocks are required for all NASPA tournament games. Each player is allowed 25 minutes to complete all plays, after which an overtime penalty applies (see “V.G.2. Overtime” on page 27). There is no limit on the time allowed per turn.

Do not use a clock which cannot readily indicate minutes of overtime.

Clocks are preferred in this order, but if all else is equal, a clock that can recall the last times displayed when turned off and back on is preferred to a clock that does not have this capability:

- a. digital clocks that count down and show exact minutes and seconds of time remaining and of overtime;
- b. analog clocks that count down and show exact minutes and seconds of time remaining and of overtime;
- c. digital clocks that count down and do not show exact minutes and seconds of overtime;
- d. digital clocks that begin at zero and count up;
- e. analog clocks that do not show exact minutes and seconds;
- f. Zarf app on an iPad;
- g. Zarf app on an iPhone;
- h. clocks which the Director deems to be excessively loud;
- i. clocks known to not activate when pressed or for being difficult to stop or neutralize.

Refer to the Technology Committee website for updates at [http://www.scrabbleplayers.org/w/Technology\\_Committee](http://www.scrabbleplayers.org/w/Technology_Committee).

If a player has been granted additional time for medical reasons, his/her opponent must be notified of this prior to the start of each game, either verbally or in writing. Failure to do so results in forfeiture of the additional time. Ideally, the clock should be set to reflect this time.

### III.A.4. Racks and Boards

The top of each tile on your rack must be visible to your opponent at all times. You may use any rack that meets this requirement.

Boards which are glary, do not turn easily, knock tiles off of racks, have distracting background designs, have any protuberances on any edge, or have premium square colors other than the traditional red, pink, and blue, are less preferred. Any board which blocks the opponent’s view of the top of your rack is unacceptable. Any board without the standard 15×15 grid or without the traditional layout of premium squares (as specified by the original inventor and as utilized for decades thereafter) is unacceptable.



### III.A.5. Tile Bags

Tile bags which are too big (tending to hide tiles when nearly empty) or too small (causing players to drop tiles or inadvertently see letters in the bag) are less preferred.

### III.A.6. Papers

The only visible papers allowed in your playing area are blank paper, your contestant scorecard, blank or current game score sheets, challenge slips, blank-designation slips, tally slips, and letter-distribution lists. You may construct and use your own letter lists to track tiles, but such lists may not be designed to also act as memory aids. All other papers in the playing area (e.g., old score sheets) must be kept out of sight and cannot be referred to at any time.

### III.A.7. Other Objects

Headphones, calculators, and other devices, electronic or otherwise, may not be utilized until game results have been entered and signed (or initialed) by both players. (See “*V.J. Recording the Game*” on page 28.) Exceptions may only be made for legitimate medical reasons, and must be approved by the Director. Earplugs, however, are acceptable.

### III.A.8. Choice of Equipment

If tables and setups are not preassigned, then equipment which conforms more to the standards above shall take precedence. If equally conforming, the player going second gets choice of equipment. The player going second also gets to choose where to position the clock, unless his/her choice would result in two tile bags being placed in the same area. If degree of conformity is disputed, the decision of the Director shall be final.

## III.B. Confirming the Number of Tiles

Before each game, verify that 100 tiles are present. Either player may also confirm exact distribution. If you realize after the game has started that 100 tiles are not present, or that the distribution is inappropriate, the game proceeds with the incorrect set. After each game, leave all tiles on the board to facilitate verifying the count for the next game. See also *Rule IV.B.3. Loose Tiles, p. 11*; *Rule IV.C.3. Tiles from an Adjacent Game, p. 15*; and “*V.C. Finding Missing Tiles Near the End of the Game*” on page 25.

## III.C. Arriving Late

If a player is late for a round with an announced starting time, the Director shall start his/her clock no earlier than 5 minutes after the start of the round. After 25 minutes (or when a digital clock reads –0:01), the game is over and is forfeited. If the missing player arrives before then, the Director or the opponent may stop the clock. Otherwise, the arriving player stops it. If the late player does not opt to forfeit, s/he is allowed to become situated, count/bag the tiles, and draw for first (if necessary) before the game is begun with whatever time remains.

If both players are late, the Director should start either clock after 5 minutes. When the first player arrives, s/he (or the Director) should stop the clock. The Director should then note the elapsed time (which will be recorded to use against that player) and restart the clock. If/when the second player arrives, the clock is stopped in the usual manner. If both players choose to proceed, the clock with the total elapsed time will become the later player's clock. The first player's clock can be left at 25 minutes with the previously recorded time subtracted at the end of the game. If, after the second player arrives, either player wishes not to continue, the other player shall be declared the forfeit winner. If neither player arrives within 25 minutes, or if both players wish not to continue, the game is double-forfeited. See also "*V.K. Forfeits and Byes*" on page 28.

For rounds without an announced starting time, players should generally be allowed 10-minute breaks between games. However, the Director, with proper notification, may limit any break to 5 minutes to maintain an overall schedule.

### III.D. Who Plays First?

If the order of play is not predetermined, utilize the first method below that applies:

1. the player with fewer firsts;
2. the player with more seconds;
3. the player who draws the tile closest to "A" — with the blank counted before "A" — repeating as needed. Both players must be present and aware that tiles are being drawn for this determination.

*Note:* A player who forfeits a game before it has begun will be considered to have gone first for that game, second for the next forfeited game, first for the third, etc. The opponents of such games, and all players who receive byes, are assigned neither firsts nor seconds for those unplayed games.

### III.E. Who Draws Tiles First?

The player determined to go first should draw tiles first. However, if the player who was determined to go second mistakenly draws tiles first, and the first player does not catch this until s/he has also drawn tiles, then the determined-to-go-first player still plays first. However, once the first player starts his/her opponent's clock, s/he is considered to have passed his/her turn and will be charged with the first.

### III.F. Starting Play

Both players may shuffle the tiles before the game begins. If the second player has not already shuffled, the first player is encouraged to offer the bag for that purpose. If the second player is not afforded this opportunity, s/he may request to shuffle at any time during the first

player's draw. Tiles already drawn will not be returned to the bag unless the second player was not present when they were drawn.

The first player's clock should be started as soon as s/he has seen the face of any tile.

### **III.G. Positioning Tiles**

#### **III.G.1. Missing the Center Square**

The first word should cover the center square. Otherwise, it may be challenged off the board regardless of acceptability. If not challenged, the play is scored accordingly, and the center square remains available as a double word bonus square.

#### **III.G.2. Establishing Orientation**

The FIRST PLAY, which will establish the game's orientation, must create an accepted word from left to right or top to bottom. It should also conform with the orientation of the bonus square lettering. If not conforming, it may be placed in the equivalent conforming position at any time before the completion of the next successful play. After that, the orientation of the bonus square lettering is irrelevant. If all non-blank tiles are not oriented identically, the orientation of the majority of the tiles will be considered the orientation of the play. If the letter values of exactly half the tiles face one direction, and half the opposite direction, the natural orientation of the board — as determined by any printing or illustrations on its surface — shall establish the game's orientation.

#### **III.G.3. Misoriented Tiles**

Any play which does not follow the game's orientation may be challenged off. If all played tiles are not oriented identically, the orientation of the majority of the non-blank tiles in the main word formed will be considered the orientation of the play. If exactly half of the tiles are oriented correctly, the orientation of the play will be considered correct. *Note:* The "main word" is defined as whichever newly formed word contains the greatest number of newly placed tiles.

#### **III.G.4. Poorly Positioned Tiles**

A tile not fully placed in one square will be considered to be on whichever square it most covers. If more of the tile is off the board than in any single square, then that tile is considered off the board (i.e., not played). If your opponent makes a correctly oriented play, but any placed tiles are upside down or askew, you (but not your opponent) may stop the clock, position the tile(s) properly and with reasonable quickness in the same squares, and restart the clock. (See also *Rule II.A. Clock Neutralization, p. 3.*) If a tile is played face down, the opponent's clock may be restarted until s/he places the tile face up in the same square. After three corrections (including those described in *Rule IV.H.1. Verifying the Play Score, p. 19*) you may notify the Director to receive 1 extra minute of playing time.

### III.G.5. Disconnected Tiles or Words

Except for the first play, if a tile or string of tiles does not join with at least one tile already on the board or if (on any play) more than one string of tiles is played in a single turn, the play is deemed illegal. Both players are REQUIRED to announce such illegal plays as soon as they become aware of them. In such cases:

- a. If the opponent has not yet played AND started the offender's clock, the illegal play will be removed, the offender will lose his/her turn, and any tiles drawn by the offender will be handled via the overdraw procedure. (See *"IV.B.5.b. Overdraw Procedure"* on page 12.) The illegally played tiles should be counted as tiles in possession but not mixed with newly drawn tiles for the purpose of the overdraw procedure. After the overdraw procedure is complete, the illegally played tiles will be returned to the offender's rack.
- b. If the opponent has played and started the offender's clock at least one time, the score for the illegal play will be nullified, and any illegally played tiles which still do not join with tiles played before the illegal play will be returned to the bag.
- c. Any subsequent play which connects to tiles disconnected from the main body of tiles established on the initial play of the game will also be deemed illegal and will be treated as described in items "a" and "b" in this rule. That is, if noted before another play is completed, the play and all disconnected tiles will be removed, the score for the play nullified, and the offender's turn lost. If noted after another play is completed, the score will be nullified and any remaining disconnected tiles removed.
- d. If disconnected tile(s) or a final play involving disconnected tiles is discovered within 20 seconds of the end of the game (and the tally slip has not been signed or initialed by both players), then the above procedures will apply and the game will continue.
- e. When determining whether or not six consecutive scores of zero have ended a game (*"V.B. Six-Zero Rule"* on page 25), illegal plays involving disconnected tiles will only be considered part of such a tally if no legal plays have been made after the illegal play(s) but before such plays are discovered.

## IV. Playing the Game

### IV.A. Basic Rules

Please see “*Appendix: Basic Rules of Play and Scoring*” on page 31.

### IV.B. Tile Drawing

#### IV.B.1. How to Draw Tiles

Mix the tiles, if desired. (*Note:* Total mixing time for the entire draw must not exceed 10 seconds.) Hold the bag so the opening is above eye level and look away from the bag. Do not hold the bag directly between you and your opponent, as your eyes must be visible to your opponent while you are drawing. Never hold tiles in one hand while drawing tiles with the other. Always open the drawing hand, showing your open palm to your opponent, before drawing. Place tiles either onto your rack or, preferably, face down on the table and then onto your rack.

#### IV.B.2. Erroneously Returning Tiles to the Bag

A tile is defined as drawn when your hand has completely left the bag. If you erroneously return any drawn tiles to the bag, the following penalty applies, where X = the number of tiles returned: The clock is stopped, and your opponent draws X tiles from the bag plus two from your rack; if there are not enough tiles on your rack, an additional one or two will also be taken from the bag. Face up to common view, your opponent has fifteen seconds to replenish your rack to seven tiles, and to return the remaining tiles to the bag. If more time is requested, your opponent’s clock will be started.

*Note:* Improperly returning tiles to the bag may be viewed as a suspicious act; the Director should apply a harsher penalty if cheating is suspected.

#### IV.B.3. Loose Tiles

If tiles accidentally spill out while drawing from or setting down the bag, they should be returned to the bag without penalty. If one player has seen the face of a loose tile, then it should also be shown to the other player before being returned to the bag.

If a loose tile (or tiles) is discovered on or near the table, both players are responsible for thoroughly checking the board to make sure that it (and/or any other tiles) was not dislodged from or moved on the board. If so, these tiles should be put back into place. If both players agree that it did not come from the board, the tile will be returned to the bag. (If the bag is empty when a loose tile is discovered, see “V.C. Finding Missing Tiles Near the End of the Game” on page 25.)

If it is determined later in the game that the tile had in fact come from the board, refer to “IV.B.4. Played Tiles Gone Missing” on page 12.

#### **IV.B.4. Played Tiles Gone Missing**

If it is discovered that a previously played tile is missing from the board, and cannot be located in the playing area—excluding racks—call the Director.

The Director will put a placeholder (a tile from another set or a facsimile) in that spot.

If the missing tile is subsequently found, it will be put back into its proper spot.

In a recount, however, the original score is counted as if the tile were still in place, but only for those plays that were made when the tile was in place.

#### **IV.B.5. Overdraws**

##### **IV.B.5.a. Racks with More Than Seven Tiles**

ANYONE who notices a rack with more than seven tiles should always make this known to the players and/or the Director. Players are required to announce their overdraws as soon as they become aware of them.

If a play is made from a rack with more than seven tiles, and:

1. *if the opponent has not yet played and started the offender’s clock:* the illegal play shall be withdrawn, the overdraw procedure applied, and the offender will lose that turn;
2. *if the opponent has already made a play and started the offender’s clock:* the offender simply loses the points scored from the illegal play.

Any intention to hide an overdraw is considered cheating and should be investigated by the Director, who may penalize the offender and/or file an Incident Report. Three such incidents in a tournament is punishable by forfeiture of the game in progress, expulsion from the tournament, and forfeiture of any prizes offered at the event.

##### **IV.B.5.b. Overdraw Procedure**

If you draw too many tiles, or become aware at any time that you have more than seven tiles, inform your opponent, stop the clock, and complete the procedure below. If the non-offender is in the process of drawing when the overdraw is discovered, s/he stops further drawing and completes the overdraw procedure. The offender then mixes the bag (see *Rule IV.B.1. How to Draw Tiles, p. 11*) before the non-offender resumes drawing.

*Note:* See “Glossary” on page 34 for the meaning of *combine*.

*Note:* Refer to “IV.B.5.c. Irregular Overdraw Situations” on page 13 to see a list of exceptions and/or more severe penalties.

Here is the overdraw procedure, where X = the number of extra tiles.

1. *If you should have drawn a single tile, and have not combined any of the new tiles with your old tiles*, your opponent selects only the  $(X+1)$  new tiles.
2. *If you should have drawn two (or more) tiles, and have not combined any of the new tiles with your old tiles*, your opponent selects  $(X+2)$  of the new tiles.
3. *If you have combined at least one new tile with your old tiles*, your opponent selects  $(X+2)$  tiles from the combined group of all tiles. The offender may combine and place all tiles face down on the table before this selection is made.

In all cases, the opponent exposes the selected tiles face up to common view. If, after 15 seconds, a decision has not been made, the opponent’s clock should be started. There is no time limit to make a decision. Once a decision is made, s/he neutralizes the clock, returns the appropriate tiles to his/her opponent, and returns the remaining tiles to the bag. Play resumes with the player on turn’s clock being restarted.

#### **IV.B.5.c. Irregular Overdraw Situations**

##### **IV.B.5.c.1. Overdrawing While Applying Overdraw Procedure**

If the non-offender exposes MORE tiles than specified in “IV.B.5.b. Overdraw Procedure” on page 12, apply the following remedy: where Player A overdraw by X tiles, and Player B then turned over Y too many tiles, Player A now gets to return Y tiles of his/her choosing to his/her rack and places the remaining  $(X+2)$  tiles face down. Player B then selects X tiles, unseen, and replenishes Player A’s rack. The remaining, unseen tiles are returned to the bag.

##### **IV.B.5.c.2. Exchanging from a Rack with More Than Seven Tiles**

After announcing an exchange and starting the opponent’s clock, if a player is discovered to have had an overdrawn rack, the correction procedure is as follows.

1. *If no new tiles have been drawn:* the overdraw procedure is applied and the player loses his/her turn, i.e., s/he cannot exchange.
2. *If the overdraw is discovered after any new tiles are drawn, but before any tiles have been returned to the bag:* all exchanged, kept, and drawn tiles are combined. Let X = the number of overdrawn and newly drawn tiles. The opponent selects and exposes  $X+2$  of the combined tiles, and returns X of them to the bag.
3. *If the overdraw is discovered after any tiles have been returned to the bag:* redraw the number of tiles that have been returned to the bag. Combine the originally kept tiles, the replacement tiles, any tiles not yet returned to the bag and the newly drawn tiles.

Let  $X$  = the number of originally overdrawn and newly drawn tiles. The opponent selects and exposes  $X+2$  of the combined tiles, and returns  $X$  of them to the bag.

#### **IV.B.5.c.3. Late Game Overdrawing**

When a player's erroneous drawing or dropping tiles from the bag occurs when it is that player's turn, and there are fewer than 7 tiles in the bag, the following penalty supersedes "IV.B.5.b. Overdraw Procedure" on page 12. Let  $X$  = the number of extra tiles drawn.

1. If the offender has not combined new tiles with the old tiles: the non-offender combines  $X$  tiles with the non-offender's tiles, and then the non-offender returns  $X$  tiles, of his/her choosing from his/her rack, to the bag without revealing them to the offender.
2. If the offender has combined new tiles with the old tiles: the non-offender looks at all  $X+7$  of the offender's tiles; the non-offender then chooses seven tiles to go onto the offender's rack; the non-offender then combines the remaining  $X$  tiles with the non-offender's own tiles; the non-offender then returns  $X$  tiles, of his/her choosing from his/her rack, to the bag without revealing them to the offender.

#### **IV.B.6. Drawing Out of Order**

If you complete a play and draw tiles before your opponent has made his/her previous draw, there is no penalty or corrective procedure, if there are at least seven tiles in the bag. Late in the game, the Director has the discretion to penalize either player 50 tournament spread points, particularly if the bag holds at least one but fewer than seven tiles. If there are too few tiles for your opponent to replenish his/her rack, *Rule IV.B.7. End of Game Underdrawing, p. 14*, applies. Note: Players are not to deliberately draw tiles out of order.

#### **IV.B.7. End of Game Underdrawing**

Near the end of the game, if Player A draws too few tiles, and Player B's subsequent draw leaves too few tiles for Player A to replenish his/her rack, then the correction procedure is as follows.

- a. *If the mistake is noticed before Player B completes his/her NEXT play (not the play which empties the bag), the clock is stopped and within one minute Player B gives the appropriate number of tiles to Player A. If, however, none of the prematurely drawn tiles have been combined with any old tiles, then all of the newly drawn tiles should be returned to the bag for Player A to replenish his/her rack first.*
- b. *If the mistake is noticed after Player B completes his/her NEXT play (not the play which empties the bag), there is no penalty.*



## IV.C. Managing Tiles

### IV.C.1. Keeping Tiles on the Rack

Never bring tiles below the plane of the table. Always keep your tiles in sight and on your rack unless moving them to/from the bag, board, or table when appropriate. Although you are free to change your play before starting your opponent's clock, do not use the board as a physical working area for deciding a play.

### IV.C.2. Counting Tiles

Either player may count the remaining tiles in the bag. The player whose clock is running has first rights to the bag for tile counting. The opponent must immediately relinquish the bag upon request, even if s/he is in the process of drawing tiles.

Hold the bag so the opening is above eye level and look away from the bag. Do not hold the bag directly between you and your opponent, as your eyes must be visible to your opponent while you are counting. Open your hand before reaching into the bag, showing your open palm to your opponent. Show your open hand again to your opponent when removing it from the bag. Never hold your own tiles in either hand while counting tiles. Do not mention how many tiles remain.

### IV.C.3. Tiles from an Adjacent Game

If tiles from a nearby game are noticed on either player's rack, immediately stop the clock, return the foreign tiles to the proper bag, replenish tiles (if available), and restart the clock.

If a play clearly includes one or more tiles from a nearby game, then the correction procedure is as follows.

- a. *If the discovery is made before the next player completes a play*, the clock is stopped, the first player withdraws his/her play, the foreign tiles are returned to the proper bag, and replacement tiles are drawn as necessary. If the player has already combined replacement tiles, and therefore has more than seven tiles on his/her rack, the overdraw procedure (*Rule IV.B.5.a. Racks with More Than Seven Tiles, p. 12*) shall be invoked. Tiles returned to the player from the original play will not be part of the overdraw pool. After the player's rack has been established, the clock is restarted and he/she makes another play.
- b. *If the discovery is made after the next player completes a play*, the Director shall remove any foreign tiles, return them to the proper bag, and replace them with tiles from a NEUTRAL bag.

## IV.D. Board Etiquette

During your turn, you may rotate the board to whatever angle you prefer.

Allow your opponent clear visual access to the board at all times, except when making a play or verifying a score. Do not place arms, hands, or fingers directly over the board at any other time.

Do not touch the board or any tiles on the board during your opponent's turn.

## **IV.E. Passing and Exchanging**

### **IV.E.1. Passing**

You may pass your turn at any time during the game, scoring zero. To pass, announce that you are passing and start your opponent's clock. *Note:* If you start your opponent's clock in error, without having either properly completed your turn or citing a valid reason described in these rules, AND if your opponent has not subsequently exposed any tiles to you, then your turn will not have ended and your clock may be restarted. If this happens, your opponent will be awarded 1 extra minute of playing time. The granting of this time can be done by the director or (to save time in case of no contest) by the opponent.

### **IV.E.2. Exchanging**

#### **IV.E.2.a. Tile Exchange Procedure**

You may use your turn to trade one or more tiles for new tiles, provided the bag contains seven or more tiles. The exchange constitutes your turn and scores zero. The proper procedure is as follows.

1. Announce the number of tiles you are exchanging.
2. Place those tiles face down on the table, even when exchanging seven tiles.
3. Start your opponent's clock.
4. Draw new tiles from the bag, either placing them face down on the table or directly onto your rack.
5. Place the old tiles into the bag and mix.
6. Put any face down tiles on your rack.

#### **IV.E.2.b. Improper Tile Exchanges**

1. If the number of tiles placed face down does not equal the number of tiles announced, the face down tiles shall be exchanged.
2. If "Exchange" is announced but NO number is specified and NO tiles are placed on the table, the turn counts as a pass.
3. There is no penalty for putting the old tiles into the bag before drawing new tiles.
4. If you complete at least the first three steps of the Tile Exchange Procedure with fewer than seven tiles in the bag, stop the clock to resolve the situation. *If your opponent*

*has made a subsequent play and has drawn at least one new tile (or if your opponent has restarted your clock after having either passed or lost a challenge), subtract 30 points from your score. Otherwise:*

- (a) *If you have not combined new tiles with original tiles, and have not put original tiles into the bag, your turn is a pass. Show any new tiles to your opponent before returning them to the bag, and return original tiles to your rack.*
- (b) *If you have put at least one of your original tiles into the bag but have put NO new tiles onto your rack, rerack any remaining original tiles. Your opponent then exposes all drawn tiles and all tiles in the bag. Within one minute s/he replenishes your rack and puts the remaining tiles into the bag. Your turn is a pass.*
- (c) *If you have put at least one new tile onto your rack, but no original tiles into the bag, your opponent exposes all tiles set aside to be traded plus all tiles from your rack. Your opponent then chooses 7 tiles to return to your rack, the remainder being returned to the bag.*
- (d) *If you have put at least one of your original tiles into the bag, and have put at least one new tile onto your rack, your opponent then exposes all tiles in the bag, any remaining tiles set aside to be traded, plus all tiles from your rack. Your opponent then chooses 7 tiles to return to your rack, with the remainder being returned to the bag.*

## **IV.F. Playing the Blank**

### **IV.F.1. How to Designate the Blank**

You MUST clearly circle or print the blank designation on an appropriate slip before hitting your clock. The clock may be stopped to locate a slip if none are available. Use a blank sheet if no standard slips can be found. Place the completed slip midway between the players.

If both blanks are played in one turn, and the blank slip does not specifically designate different areas for recording the first and second blanks, then the leftmost or topmost designation shall be considered the first played blank.

- a. If you did not designate the blank in writing, your opponent should request that you do so and restart your clock. You MUST then record the blank and position the slip to complete your turn. No other changes may be made.
- b. If your opponent is confused about the written designation, s/he may stop the clock for blank clarification.
- c. Any spoken blank designation MUST be accompanied by an identical written designation. Verbally declaring one letter and writing another is considered suspicious and possibly unethical behavior. The written declaration, however, prevails. A spoken designation without a written designation is equivalent to NO DESIGNATION. In

the event the game proceeds without a written designation, any future blank dispute shall be resolved by the Director, who shall disregard any claimed spoken designation. See item “e” below, and *Rule IV.F.2. Disputes, p. 18*.

- d. If a request for clarification is initiated after the normal window for challenging or holding has passed, no challenge or hold may be made. See *Rule IV.I.1. When to Hold or Challenge, p. 20*.
- e. Any *unadjudicated* challenge involving a blank may be withdrawn if the blank was not designated in writing at the time of the challenge or if the written designation is determined by the Director to be unclear. The Director should restart the clock of the blank player, requesting a clearly written designation. The challenger will then have the option of withdrawing the challenge, or of challenging ANY word formed by the blank.
- f. Once a subsequent play is made, a request for blank clarification or designation must be made on one’s own time.
- g. The Director may modify the blank designation procedure as s/he sees fit to accommodate blind players.

## IV.F.2. Disputes

All blank designation disputes shall be resolved by the Director, who has the authority to designate the blank as reasonably as possible in the event a written designation was not clearly made. The Director should also be called if a player refuses a request to record the blank designation. See also *Rule IV.F.1. How to Designate the Blank, p. 17*, items “c” and “e”.

## IV.G. Completing a Turn

### IV.G.1. How to Complete a Turn

- a. After your opponent’s last play, record the cumulative score. (May be waived if bag is empty.)
- b. Position your tiles on the board. You may remove, reposition, or adjust the placement of tiles only if you have not yet started your opponent’s clock.
- c. If playing a blank, designate it appropriately. (See *Rule IV.F.1. How to Designate the Blank, p. 17*.)
- d. Declare the score.
- e. Start your opponent’s clock (or stop clock if playing out), ending your turn. If opponent’s clock has already been running or stopped, the turn ends after step “d”.
- f. Record your cumulative score. (May be waived if bag is empty.)
- g. Record your play, if desired.
- h. Draw tiles to replenish your rack.
- i. Track tiles, if desired.

## **IV.G.2. End of Turn Irregularities**

### **IV.G.2.a. Failing to Start Opponent's Clock**

If you make a play, announce the score, and draw a tile before starting opponent's clock, your turn ends. Opponent has 20 seconds to hold the play. If the play is successfully challenged, new tiles not combined with old tiles are returned to the bag (and shown to your opponent if you have seen them). If any new tiles have been added to your rack, "*IV.B.5.b. Overdraw Procedure*" on page 12, shall be invoked, where X is the number of new tiles on your rack.

### **IV.G.2.b. Tracking Out of Order**

If you track tiles before drawing replenishment tiles, and if this delays your opponent from drawing tiles, the Director may be called to issue a warning. After each subsequent delay caused by tracking out of order, your opponent shall earn one extra minute of playing time.

### **IV.G.2.c. Not Allowing Sufficient Time for Holds or Challenges**

If a quick draw does not allow your opponent five seconds to consider holding or challenging, s/he may petition the Director to allow a hold or challenge to proceed. If the play is successfully challenged, new tiles not combined with old tiles are simply returned to the bag (and shown to your opponent if you have seen them). If any new tiles have been combined with old tiles, "*IV.B.5.b. Overdraw Procedure*" on page 12, shall be invoked, where X is the number of new tiles on your rack.

### **IV.G.2.d. Failing to Announce Score**

If you fail to announce your score, or if your opponent does not hear your announced score, this should be treated as a scoring discrepancy and handled on a stopped clock.

## **IV.H. Scoring Issues**

### **IV.H.1. Verifying the Play Score**

If you request your opponent's previous play and/or play score on your time, s/he must comply. If you do not agree with an announced play score, stop the clock to resolve the discrepancy. After three corrections (including those described in "*III.G.4. Poorly Positioned Tiles*" on page 9), you may notify the Director to receive 1 extra minute of playing time.

### **IV.H.2. Verifying Cumulative Scores**

You may ask for cumulative score verification only when your own clock is running. Your opponent must then agree or disagree with the stated score. Stop the clock to resolve any discrepancy. *Note:* If the bag is empty and the opponent has waived recording the current cumulative score (as per *Rule IV.G.1. How to Complete a Turn, p. 18*), then s/he is only obligated to reveal his or her most recent cumulative score.

### IV.H.3. Willfully Fostering Incorrect Scores

It is considered cheating to *knowingly* announce an incorrect score, to verify an incorrect score, to allow an opponent's incorrect single turn or cumulative score to go unchallenged, or to allow a disconnected play to stand.

## IV.I. Holding and Challenging

### IV.I.1. When to Hold or Challenge

When your opponent's turn ends, you may hold or challenge a play until your opponent has drawn at least one tile. The two exceptions to this are when your opponent quick draws (see Rule IV.G.2.c. Not Allowing Sufficient Time for Holds or Challenges, p. 19) and if your opponent fails to start your clock (see "IV.G.2.a. Failing to Start Opponent's Clock" on page 19). Recording a score does not affect your right to hold or challenge.

It is strongly recommended that you take possession of the bag when you put your opponent on hold, and offer it back to your opponent to signify acceptance of the play.

Once the tile bag is empty and there are no tiles to be drawn, but before the game has ended, there is NO time limit for holding or challenging a play. There are separate rules concerning the final play of the game (see "V.E. Neutralizing the Clock on the Out Play" on page 26).

### IV.I.2. Holding the Play

To reserve the right to challenge a play, call "hold" or otherwise notify your opponent not to draw tiles; it is suggested that you take possession of the bag until the hold is released. A play may not be held simply as a ploy to delay your opponent from drawing. End a hold by saying "OK" or "I accept" or by offering the bag to your opponent.

*Courtesy Rule:* During the hold, your clock continues to run, and there is no limit on the time you take to challenge or release the hold. However, your opponent may draw replacement tiles after 15 seconds, but must keep them separate (NOT on the same rack) from any unplayed tiles for the duration of the hold. If you then successfully challenge, your opponent shows these tiles to you and returns them to the bag before removing the challenged play from the board. If any new tiles have been combined (see "Glossary" on page 34) with unplayed tiles, the successful challenger will examine the original unplayed tiles and all newly drawn tiles. The tiles from the challenged play should be counted as tiles in possession but not mixed with newly drawn tiles for the purpose of the overdraw procedure. After the overdraw procedure is complete, the tiles from the challenged play will be returned to the offender's rack.

### IV.I.3. Challenging the Play

You may challenge any word(s) formed on a play by declaring you are challenging, BUT the challenge is not binding until you neutralize the clock. Beginning any part of the adjudication procedure in Rule IV.J.1. Software Self-Lookup Procedure, p. 21, or Rule IV.K.2. Manual

Lookup Procedure, p. 22, with or without neutralizing the clock, is also indicative of a binding challenge. Note: the responsibility for neutralizing the clock is with the challenger. Challenging before your opponent's turn has ended is void and improper. The penalty for the loser of the challenge is zero score and loss of turn. You may withdraw a challenge if you misunderstand the designation of the blank, but only if the blank was not clearly designated in writing at the time of the challenge. (See Rule IV.F.1. How to Designate the Blank, p. 17, item e.) Note: Either player may concede a challenge without a formal lookup.

## **IV.J. Adjudicating Challenges by Computer**

### **IV.J.1. Software Self-Lookup Procedure**

- a. The challenger writes the challenged word(s) on a slip of paper. *Note:* Words may be added or removed from the challenge list at any time before the computer has adjudicated the play.
- b. Both players verify the challenged word(s) are written as played. If the challenged word(s) are NOT written, the opponent may require it.
- c. Both players place all racked tiles face down.
- d. Both players walk to the computer station without speaking or disturbing others.
- e. If either player, at any time before the adjudication, feels a word was written incorrectly, then both players should return to their board for verification.
- f. The challenger types the word(s) being challenged. All word(s) must be typed before adjudication.
- g. Both players verify the word(s) have been entered correctly, and the player being challenged presses the adjudication key (usually the TAB key).
- h. The adjudication result is marked on the challenge slip.
- i. Both players return to their board without speaking or disturbing others.
- j. The appropriate player loses his/her turn.
- k. If the player losing the challenge had already drawn tiles, those tiles are shown to the opponent and returned to the bag. If the drawn tiles have been combined with unplayed tiles, see *Rule IV.I.2. Holding the Play, p. 20.*
- l. The clock may only be restarted after both players are seated, all face down tiles have been reracked, any successfully challenged play removed from the board, any blank designation involving a successfully challenged word crossed out or erased, and (in the case of an unsuccessful challenge) the drawer has seen the face of at least one replenishment tile. If either player delays these processes, the appropriate clock may be restarted immediately. *Note: Recording the cumulative score and/or play before drawing replenishment tiles is NOT a delay of game.*

- m. Computer adjudication is final unless either player feels the computer or program is flawed (and requests a manual adjudication) or feels a word may not have been entered correctly (and chooses to repeat the procedure).

### **IV.J.2. Improper Self-Lookups**

If any words are looked up separately in a multi-word challenge, then no penalty shall be imposed if both players contributed to the error. If one player is solely responsible AND if the adjudication is “unacceptable,” then that player shall receive a 10-point game penalty. In either case, if the error is discovered before all words have been checked and if the adjudication at that point is “unacceptable,” then no further words shall be entered.

## **IV.K. Adjudicating Challenges Manually**

### **IV.K.1. Who May Utilize Manual Lookups**

Players with physical challenges should inform the Director prior to the event that they will require manual lookups. All others must utilize software self-lookup (see *Rule IV.J.1. Software Self-Lookup Procedure, p. 21*) unless adjudication computers are not available.

### **IV.K.2. Manual Lookup Procedure**

- a. The challenger writes the challenged word(s) on a slip of paper, verifies spelling and legibility with the opponent, and alerts a Word Judge. Only the Director or designated staff may act as Word Judge. If the challenged word(s) are NOT written, the opponent may require it.
- b. Before the lookup, the Word Judge confirms that the words on the slip were actually played, and the players must resolve any discrepancies. *Note:* Words may be added or removed from the challenge list any time before the play has been adjudicated.
- c. The play will be designated acceptable or unacceptable, and the appropriate player loses his/her turn.
- d. Play proceeds as described in step 1 of the self-adjudication procedure (See *Rule IV.J.1. Software Self-Lookup Procedure, p. 21*).

### **IV.K.3. Appropriate Word Judge Behavior**

- a. If you notice at any time during the adjudication that the clock is running, you must request that it be stopped before continuing.
- b. Require a clearly printed challenge slip. If the spelling is in doubt, ask the players for clarification.
- c. Confirm that the word(s) on the slip were actually played, and require the players to resolve any discrepancy.



- d. Do not reveal the acceptability of specific words. Designate the play acceptable or unacceptable.
- e. Check words of 10 or more letters first in *OWL2*. If not found, then check in *Long List*.  
*Note:* Unless a player specifically requests a manual adjudication, the word judge may optionally adjudicate the play by computer in lieu of a direct *OWL2/Long List* lookup.
- f. Verify blank designations by using the blank designation slip.
- g. Never engage the players or show any personal responses to a challenge.
- h. Never research words while observing games because such actions can give extra information to the players.
- i. Never rush an adjudication.
- j. If time permits, verify after a challenge that the appropriate player loses his/her turn.

#### **IV.K.4. Requesting a Second Opinion**

Either player may request a review of a manual adjudication from another Word Judge, and may obtain a third opinion if the first two differ.

#### **IV.K.5. Compensating Erroneous Adjudications**

If you lose a turn because a manual adjudication was erroneous, and you notify the Director before leaving the tournament area for that day, your cumulative spread will be increased by the points scored for the play plus 25 points.

#### **IV.L. Leaving the Playing Area During a Game**

If you must leave the playing area during a game, do so only after making a play, starting your opponent's clock, and recording the cumulative score. Do not draw tiles. If your opponent plays while you are gone, s/he starts your clock and records the cumulative score, but does not draw tiles. When you return, the clock should be stopped and s/he must point out the play. The clock will be started when you see your first new tile, and you then have 5 seconds to hold or challenge.

If any tiles (X) are drawn while a player is absent, the returning player shall expose X+2 tiles (if possible) from the pool of all tiles on the offender's rack plus all tiles drawn but not yet racked, and return X tiles to the bag within one minute. This procedure should be executed before any challenge is considered. In the event of a successful challenge, played tiles will be returned from the board to the offender's rack. If the play is acceptable, the offender will draw new tiles. If the violation is discovered after the returning player's subsequent play, there is no penalty.

### **IV.M. Leaving a Game at the Director's Request**

When a qualified Director or Rules Committee member is asked for assistance on a ruling while playing their game, and it is his/her turn, the clock should be neutralized and both players should put their tiles facedown. If it is the opponent's turn, the clock should be neutralized at the end of his play and any remaining tiles be placed facedown. No replacement tiles may be drawn until the play is acknowledged and accepted.

## V. Ending the Game

### V.A. Final Play

The game ends when one player has successfully played all of his/her tiles, and the bag is empty. (See *Rule V.E. Neutralizing the Clock on the Out Play*, p. 26.)

### V.B. Six-Zero Rule

The game may also end by either player neutralizing the clock after a sixth successive zero-scoring play from passes, exchanges, challenges, or illegal plays. (See *Rule III.G.5. Disconnected Tiles or Words*, p. 10.)

If a scoring play is eventually made, however, the game will continue.

### V.C. Finding Missing Tiles Near the End of the Game

1. If one or more tile(s) are found in your area (not in the bag) AFTER the game has ended (see *Rule V.E. Neutralizing the Clock on the Out Play*, p. 26), they are ignored.
2. If one or more tile(s) are found in your area (not in the bag) BEFORE the game has ended, but after the bag is empty, place them in the bag (unseen, if possible), call the Director for assistance, and try to decide who should have drawn them. That player then receives the tile(s), and play resumes without penalty. If the determination cannot be made, or if time is too short to continue deliberating, then play resumes without the found tile(s).
3. If you find at least one tile IN THE BAG at the end of the game, and both players have not yet signed or initialed the tally slip, then the player who should have drawn it, gets it. If both players then have at least one tile on their racks, the game continues.
4. If a tile is found in your area or in the bag DURING A FINAL PLAY ADJUDICATION then the player who should have drawn it, gets it. The challenge, if not yet adjudicated, may be rescinded if the tile goes to the player who had “gone out,” but only if the tile is found outside the bag. (See *Rule V.E. Neutralizing the Clock on the Out Play*, p. 26.)

## V.D. Forced Overtime

If one player has unplayable tiles, it is unethical for the other player to play blatant phoneys or to pass in place solely to force overtime penalty points. The Director should be called to erase any overtime penalty resulting from this practice.

## V.E. Neutralizing the Clock on the Out Play

After the final play, stop the clock. The game is over if your opponent reveals his/her tiles, declares their point value, agrees on a final score, or does any other action that concedes the game to be over unless one or more tiles are discovered IN the tile bag. (See *Rule V.C. Finding Missing Tiles Near the End of the Game*, p. 25, item 3.) The game is also over if your opponent neither holds nor challenges within 20 seconds. If the play is held, start your opponent's clock. It will run until s/he releases the hold (ending the game) or challenges.

When a player makes an alleged "out play" and stops the clock, it is his/her opponent's responsibility to verify that the tile bag is empty before making an "automatic challenge" of the play. (See "*V.C. Finding Missing Tiles Near the End of the Game*" on page 25 item 4.)

If the clock is not stopped after the final play, the game is considered over and the clock is considered stopped when the player with tiles reveals them or declares their point value. It is unethical to attempt to earn overtime points when the out player either forgets to stop the clock or starts the opponent's clock. The Director, by estimating the exact moment unused tiles (or their point value) were revealed, may erase all time penalties caused by the failure to stop the clock.

Both players should avoid touching the clock or any played tiles until all required scorecards/tally slips have been signed or initialed. If a time penalty cannot be agreed upon, the Director should be called to assist.

## V.F. Director-Shortened Games

The Director may terminate any game which interferes with tournament function. A warning should be issued a few minutes before termination, giving the players a chance to finish naturally. Each player's score is then reduced by the total value of his/her unplayed tiles.

## V.G. Adjusting the Score

### V.G.1. Unplayed Tiles

If you go out, increase your score by double the value of your opponent's unplayed tiles.

If the game ends with neither player going out, each player's score is reduced by the total value of his/her unplayed tiles.

See *Rule V.G.3. Overtime Exceeding 10 Minutes*, p. 27, for an exception to this rule.

## V.G.2. Overtime

If you use more than 25 minutes, reduce your score by 10 points for each minute or fraction of a minute of overtime. (Exception: See “*V.D. Forced Overtime*” on page 26.) A digital clock is not in overtime when it reads 0:00 or –0:00.

## V.G.3. Overtime Exceeding 10 Minutes

If the Director has not already terminated the game according to “*V.F. Director-Shortened Games*” on page 26, a game will automatically be terminated once either player exceeds 10 minutes of overtime.

The player who exceeds 10 minutes of overtime will automatically lose the game and will have 100 points deducted from his/her score. If his/her opponent has also gone overtime, the usual overtime penalty will apply.

If the player who has exceeded 10 minutes overtime still has a greater score than that of the opponent, the opponent’s score is adjusted upward so that a one-point margin of victory will be awarded.

Any tiles remaining on the players’ racks are to be disregarded. No recount of the game is permitted.

Note: This rule is not to be used as a strategic tool. If the Director deems that a player has abused this rules, at any point in a tournament, to ensure limiting point spread, any prize money will be forfeited to the next spot.

## V.H. Winning the Game

The player with the highest adjusted score wins the game. If scores are the same, the game is a tie, and each player is awarded one-half (½) a win.

## V.I. Recounting the Game

Either player, or both, may recount a game. No third party should participate. Recounts must be initiated within one minute of the players agreeing upon the score of the game after the final play, and also before the tally slip is signed. If your opponent wishes to recount, you must provide your score sheet whether or not you participate.

If you choose not to participate in the recount, you may contest only specific mistakes found by your opponent. You may not begin or demand another recount.

The Director, after issuing a one minute warning, may terminate a recount that interferes with tournament function, is deemed frivolous, or where neither player has the means to verify each turn quickly and without dispute. In that case, the Director will adjudicate the result by applying any adjustments agreed upon to that point.

See also: *Rule V.G.3. Overtime Exceeding 10 Minutes, p. 27.*

## V.J. Recording the Game

Any recount must be made, and any discrepancy resolved, before results are submitted. Enter game results on the tally slip (results reporting slip), or on scorecards (used for recording all game results) if tally slips are not utilized. Both players must then sign or initial these results to certify their correctness. After that, no further adjustments may be made unless both players, in agreement, notify the Director of a *reporting* error (e.g., players' scores reversed or the score written on the tally slip differs from what both players agreed upon at the end of the game). Score sheets and/or scorecards may be used to substantiate the adjustment. Note that time penalty omissions, score adjustments for unplayed tiles, and scoring errors made during the game may not be corrected at this time. However, if unethical behavior is involved, and is proven or acknowledged by the wrongdoer, the Director may use his/her discretion to make adjustments after the fact.

If tally slips are used for submitting results, but scorecards are used to record/determine who goes first, they should be signed/initialed to verify firsts and seconds only

*Note:* It is the responsibility of the winner (or of the player going first if the game is a tie) to promptly submit the tally slip or scorecard.

## V.K. Forfeits and Byes

1. *If you fail to show for a game*, you receive a forfeit loss and 50 points are subtracted from your total spread. Your opponent receives a forfeit win and 50 points are added to his/her total spread. The forfeit is not a rated game. However, if both players and the Director agree, the game may be postponed without forfeit and played as a rated game at a time convenient to all. *Note:* Double-forfeit games (where both players arrive late) may also be made up in this manner. See also *Rule III.C. Arriving Late*, p. 7.
2. *If you must leave a game in progress*, and the game cannot be postponed to a time convenient to all, you receive a rated loss for that game. (See *Rule I.B. Resigning*, p. 1.) *If you are ahead when you leave*, your opponent's score is increased so that it is 50 points greater than yours. *If you are behind*, your score is reduced by 50 points. The game has begun — and is therefore considered a rated game — when the first player has drawn at least one tile and the second player is alerted to this action.
3. If you forfeit a game (or leave a game in progress) to ensure winning a prize for yourself or another player, the Director has the discretion to increase the standard forfeit penalty as s/he sees fit, and to file an Incident Report with NASPA. *Note:* If you purposely forfeit a game (or leave a game in progress) simply to avoid participating in an annotated game, only standard forfeit penalties shall apply to first-time violators. For

repeat offenses, please see the *Code of Conduct*, as NASPA considers this action to be a “classification 1 code violation.”

4. You receive a *bye* if you are present for a given round but are not assigned an opponent. A bye counts as a win, with 50 points added to total spread. A bye is not a rated game.

## VI. Play Using the International Lexicon

### VI.A. Word Reference

The word reference is the third edition of *Collins Official Scrabble Words*, first published in 2011, and commonly referred to as CSW2012.

### VI.B. Challenges

1. The clock may always be started as soon as your opponent has reracked all his tiles
2. Upon a successful challenge, the player takes his tiles back, loses his turn and restarts the challenger's clock.
3. Upon an unsuccessful challenge, the player adds either 5 or 10 points per word challenged to his cumulative score. This number must be specified by the Director when requesting tournament sanctioning. Alternatively, the Director may request that standard NASPA challenge rules be in effect.



## Appendix: Basic Rules of Play and Scoring

### A.I. Making Plays

#### A.I.A. The First Play of the Game

The first player places two or more letters on the board to form a word in either a horizontal or vertical position, with one tile covering the center square. (See “III.G.1. Missing the Center Square” on page 9.) The center square is considered a double word score square. Any player has the option of passing or exchanging tiles instead of playing. See “IV.E. Passing and Exchanging” on page 16, for details regarding passing and exchanging.

#### A.I.B. Subsequent Plays

The game continues as players add one or more letters to those already played to form a new word or words. All words added to the board must join with tiles already played and must make new words wherever they join with existing tiles. The player gets credit for all words played in this fashion. Diagonal words are not permitted. All tiles added to the board in any individual play must help to spell one main horizontal or vertical word; otherwise the play must be removed. See also “III.G.5. Disconnected Tiles or Words” on page 10.

#### A.I.C. How New Words are Formed on the Board

Assume A R M is already on the board. You may:

1. Add one or more letters to a word already on the board.

*Examples:* **H** A R M    A R M **E D**    **C H** A R M **E D**    A R M **S**

2. Place a word at right angles to a word already on the board. The new word must use at least one of the letters already on the board or must add a letter to a word or words on the board.

*Examples:* **H** A R M    A R M  
**A**                    **I**  
**D**                    **D**

- Place a complete word parallel to a word already played, so that adjoining letters also form complete words.

*Example:* **M E A L**

A R M

## **A.II. Scoring**

### **A.II.A. Letter Values**

The score value of each letter is indicated by a number at the bottom of the tile. The blanks have a score value of zero.

### **A.II.B. Scoring Each Play**

The score for each turn is the sum of the letter values in EACH word formed or modified during the play, plus the additional points obtained from placing letters on premium squares.

A turn using all seven tiles earns a 50-point bonus. Such a play is commonly called a “Bingo.”

### **A.II.C. Double and Triple Letter Bonus Squares**

- A Double Letter Score square doubles the score of a letter placed on it.
- A Triple Letter Score square triples the score of a letter placed on it.

### **A.II.D. Double and Triple Word Bonus Squares**

- The center square and any square labeled Double Word Score doubles the score of an entire word when one of its letters is placed on it.
- A Triple Word Score square triples the score for an entire word when one of its letters is placed on it.

### **A.II.E. Score DLSs and TLSs before DWSs and TWSs**

When scoring a turn, all premiums from double or triple letter values, if any, are totaled before doubling or tripling the word score.

### **A.II.F. Double-Double (DWS-DWS)**

If a word is formed that covers two Double Word Score squares, the score is doubled and then redoubled, or is four times the total letter count.

### **A.II.G. Triple-Triple (TWS-TWS)**

If a word is formed that covers two Triple Word Score squares, the score is tripled and then tripled again, or is nine times the total letter count.

**A.II.H. Bonus Squares Score on One Turn Only**

The letter premium squares and the word premium squares apply only to the turn in which they are originally covered by a word. In all subsequent turns, letters on those squares count only at face value.

**A.II.I. Using the Blank on a DWS or TWS**

When a blank tile is played on a Double Word Score square or a Triple Word Score square, the value of the word is doubled or tripled even though the blank itself has a zero score value.

## Glossary

The SCRABBLE community has evolved its own playing jargon. Here are definitions of some frequently used terms that have worked their way into the tournament rules and culture. Each entry consists of the following elements in order: headword, part of speech (*n* for noun or noun phrase, *v* for verb or verb phrase), inflections (except for proper nouns), and definition. Asterisked words are not acceptable in play.

**bingo** *n* (pl. bingos, bingos) a play made using all seven tiles, scoring a 50-point bonus. See *Rule A.II.B. Scoring Each Play*, p. 31.

**bingo** *v* (bingos, bingos, bingoes\*, binging\*) to play a bingo, q.v.

**Collins** *n* An edition of the international word list. See *CSW2012* and *Rule VI.A. Word Reference*, p. 30.

**combine tiles** *v* (combines tiles, combined tiles, combining tiles) to place at least one tile from one (usually newly drawn) group together with another group (usually left from the previous play). In particular, placing one tile from one group on the same rack as another group constitutes combining the groups of tiles. This action renders the two groups of tiles inseparable under the rules, requiring that they be treated as one group for the purposes of any overdraw-like procedure. See also *mix tiles*.

**CSW2012** *n* The current edition of the international word list. See *Collins* and *Rule VI.A. Word Reference*, p. 29.

**cume\*** *n* (pl. cumes\*) cumulative spread: the total difference between the points scored by a player and by the player's opponents, usually used as a secondary criterion for ranking players tied on wins and losses.

**fast-bagging** *n* (pl. fast-baggings) the act of drawing replacement tiles quickly to prevent a challenge. See *Rule IV.G.2.c. Not Allowing Sufficient Time for Holds or Challenges*, p. 19.

**Long List** *n* A word reference for words of 10–15 letters. See *Rule III.A.1. References*, p. 5.

**mix tiles** *v* (mixes tiles, mixed tiles, mixing tiles) to stir the tiles in the bag to randomize their positions. As per *Rule IV.B.1. How to Draw Tiles*, p. 11, when you are entitled to mix the tiles, you may do so for up to ten seconds. See also *combine tiles*.

**neutralize the clock** *v* (neutralizes the clock, neutralized the clock, neutralizing the clock) See *stop the clock*.

**OSPD4** *n* The *Official SCRABBLE Players Dictionary*, the word reference used for shorter words in School SCRABBLE play.

**OWL2** *n* The *Official Tournament and Club Word List*. See *Rule III.A.1. References, p. 5*.

**stop the clock** *v* (stops the clock, stopped the clock, stopping the clock) to put the clock in the condition where neither player's time is counting down. See the Index for the long list of situations in which this is permitted. For historical reasons, this action is called *neutralizing the clock* in the names of rules.

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