

NASPA OFFICIAL TOURNAMENT RULES - Table of Contents

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INTRODUCTION

This document outlines the rules and guidelines that govern NASPA club and tournament play. It is an evergreen reference for players and Directors that will be updated as required to ensure maximum clarity around correct procedures, etiquette, expected behaviors and game requirements.

We strive to create a fun, fair, safe, respectful, inclusive, competitive, collegial and disciplined environment for our players. Behavior at NASPA-sctioned tournaments and clubs is subject to the [NASPA Code of Conduct](#).

1. General Principles and Guidelines

1.1 Using the Rules

- The rules are there to help ensure fair play—not to intimidate your opponent.
- If you’re unsure about a rule, stop the clock and call the Director.

1.2 Director’s Discretion

- If a situation isn’t covered by the rules, the Director decides what is fair.
- The Director will try to ensure that no player:
 - Benefits from their own mistake
 - Is unfairly penalized for an issue they didn’t cause
- If a Director’s decision affects you, you can ask for a second opinion from another Director, and a third if the rulings differ. The first Director will consider this input in making the final ruling.

1.3 Tournament Games and Lexicons

- You may only play one tournament game at a time.
 - This seems like a weird thing to have to include, but just in case you thought you might want to, for example, play in two divisions at once – you’re not allowed. 😊
- NASPA tournaments use whichever versions of the NASPA Word List (NWL) and the Collins Scrabble Words (CSW) lexicons are in effect at the time.
 - Directors may provide challenge computers or allow self-adjudication on mobile devices.
 - Always confirm the lexicon is set correctly before adjudicating a challenge.
 - While double challenge is standard for NWL tournaments and 5-point challenge is standard for CSW tournaments, Directors may sanction tournaments with different challenge rules.
 - These will be communicated in the event flyer before registration.

2. Fair Play and Conduct

2.1 Fair Play

- All players must act honestly and fairly.
- Cheating, helping someone else cheat, or deliberately throwing a game (for example, passing repeatedly to lower your spread) is prohibited.
 - This means resigning is also not allowed unless specified by Director
- Repeated or serious misconduct can result in warnings, point penalties, forfeits, or expulsion at the Director's discretion.

2.2 Respectful Behavior

- Treat everyone with respect.
- Threats, insults, or disruptive behavior (like loud complaining) are not allowed.
- Distracting noises or comments unrelated to the game are also prohibited.

2.3 Watching Other Games

- If you watch other games, stay silent and avoid giving any information.
- While observing, you may not react to plays, look up words, or interfere with the game in any way (except in specific scenarios identified in [2.8](#))
- You must leave the area if players ask you to stop watching.

2.4 Suspicious Behaviour

- Avoid doing anything that could look suspicious.
- If you realize you've done something that might look questionable (for example, picking up the tile bag when it's not your turn), explain it immediately to your opponent.

2.5 Player Accommodations

- Players may be granted special accommodations for religious or medical reasons that differ from the rules (e.g. extra time, keeping score, leaving playing area).
 - These accommodations will be made clear before the game starts
 - Call the Director if you need clarification or confirmation of the accommodations and how they will be applied

2.6 Arriving Late

- If you are late, the Director may start your clock 5 minutes after games have begun.
 - If you do not arrive within 25 minutes, you forfeit the game

- Once you arrive, the clock is stopped.
- If you still have time remaining, you may play with whatever time remains or you can opt to forfeit ([7.9](#))
- If both players are late, the Director will start one clock after 5 minutes.
 - The clock is stopped when the first player arrives and the elapsed time is noted and deducted from their clock at the end of the game.
 - The clock is then restarted until the second player arrives, and that becomes their clock for the game.
 - If either player chooses, they may take a forfeit loss at this point.
 - If neither player wants to play the game, they both forfeit.
 - If neither player shows up within 25 minutes, both players forfeit. ([7.9](#))

2.7 Stopping the Clock

- You may stop the clock if:
 - You need help from the Director
 - There is a scoring disagreement or you didn't hear the score
 - You observe an irregularity or infraction
 - You are challenging a play
- While the clock is stopped, you may **not**:
 - Study your rack or the board
 - Track tiles
 - Adjust the tiles on the board (except to fix misorientation or alignment)
- Only discuss the issue at hand until play resumes.
- **In procedures that require a player to make a decision while the clock is stopped**, time limits are short during routine play and longer in late-game situations where decisions have greater impact.

Examples include:

- 15 seconds to decide which tile(s) to put back in the bag after an overdraw
- 1 minute to decide which 7 tiles to give an opponent after an exchange when fewer than 7 tiles remain in the bag.

2.8 Reporting Irregularities

- Inform the players or the Director if you notice any of the following in your game or nearby games:
 - Stray tiles on the floor/table etc.
 - Disconnected or mistakenly moved tiles
 - More than 7 tiles on a player's rack
 - A stopped clock that should be running or vice versa
 - A ruling that might be incorrect
 - you should suggest a player get second opinion if you think a Director has made the wrong call
- **Do not get involved in other scenarios** (e.g. scoring errors, clock running on wrong player's time) unless the game has ended and both players have signed the result slip. These irregularities are the players' responsibility.

- **Streamed games:** A Director or Producer may intervene and offer the correct information if players on stream disagree on something (score, sequence of events etc.) that can be easily verified from the streamed video.

3. Game Setup and Equipment

3.1 Equipment Requirements

- You must use approved equipment in NASPA tournaments. Equipment includes the board, tiles, racks, tile bag, and clock.

3.2 Boards

- Boards have the standard Scrabble layout (15x15, premium squares) and must also:
 - Rotate easily
 - Have raised grid/ridges that hold tiles in place
 - Allow unrestricted view of the top of your rack/tiles
- Avoid boards that:
 - Block your opponent's view of your tiles
 - Have unusual colors or distracting designs
 - Are too glossy or don't turn easily
 - Knock tiles off racks when rotated

3.3 Tiles

- Tiles must be:
 - 100 in total, with the traditional distribution and point values
 - Hard to distinguish by sight or touch (unless required for accessibility)
 - Legible - not faded or worn
 - Easy to pick up
 - The front and back of the tiles should look/feel different so that:
 - it's impossible to play a tile face down as a blank
 - you can place tiles face down on the table without looking at them
- If your tiles are the same as a neighbor's setup and games have not started, one of you must switch tiles. If three adjacent setups have the same tiles, the middle tiles must be switched.

3.4 Tile Bags

- Tile bags should be:
 - Large enough to mix tiles without hiding them when nearly empty
 - Small enough that you can't see inside while drawing
 - In good shape with no holes or tears

3.5 Clocks

- All games must use a clock.

- Each player has 25 minutes total and can budget that time however they want over the game. Overtime penalties apply after this limit.
- Clock guidelines:
 - All clocks must show minutes and seconds, including for overtime.
 - Avoid clocks that are noisy or distracting.
 - Faulty clocks are prohibited (e.g. display is hard to read; fail to start/stop reliably)
 - If a clock appears faulty or you suspect it is malfunctioning, pause the game and call a Director
 - Replace the clock if possible
 - Scrabble clock apps on mobile devices are permitted as long as both players agree and Do Not Disturb mode is enabled.
- If you are granted extra time for a medical reason, you must inform your opponent before the game starts.
 - If you fail to do this, you forfeit the extra time.

3.6 Racks

- Any rack is allowed if the top edge of your tiles is visible to your opponent.
- Avoid using racks that cause tiles to slide, fall or be obscured during play.

3.7 Papers

- The only papers you may have visible during the game are:
 - Blank paper
 - Your score sheet for the current game
 - Contestant card
 - Challenge slips
 - Blank designation slips
 - Tally slips
 - A letter-distribution list for tracking
- You may create your own tracking sheets, but they cannot serve as memory aids.

3.8 Other Objects

- You may not use or look at devices during a game, including:
 - Phones
 - Calculators - this includes recounts
 - Tablets
- Exceptions may be made for approved medical accommodations.
- Headphones/Earbuds require preapproval but earplugs are permitted.
- Personal streaming equipment may be permitted at Director's discretion but must not interfere with gameplay or invite suspicions of cheating in any way.

3.9 Choice of Equipment

- Once set up, do not move equipment between tables during the tournament
- Players are not guaranteed to play on their own equipment. It is actually preferable to play on neutral equipment where possible.
- Players choose or set up a table with NASPA-approved equipment
- Prioritize the equipment that best meets NASPA's standards for quality
 - A player may substitute higher-quality equipment in an existing set-up if they have it
- If players disagree on choice of equipment:
 - If equipment is of equal quality, the player going second gets to choose
 - The player going second also chooses where to place the clock, as long as their choice doesn't put two tile bags in the same spot.
- If there is any disagreement about equipment quality, the Director decides.

3.10 Confirming Tiles

- Before each game, verify there are exactly 100 tiles. You may also check the distribution. Do not start the game with the wrong number or distribution of tiles.
- If a problem is discovered after the game starts:
 - Check for stray or missing tiles on the board or near the area
 - If the missing tiles cannot be found, continue play with the tiles as they are
- After the game ends, leave all tiles on the board to help verify the count before the next game.
 - Best practice is to arrange in 5x5 tile blocks face up in each corner of the board for ease of visual verification.

3.11 Blank/Challenge Slip

- Before play starts, ensure there's a fresh blank-designation/challenge slip in front of or opposite the clock where it is easily visible and accessible to both players
- Do not move the slip during the game unless you are designating a blank, confirming a blank designation, or writing down a play to challenge.

4. Gameplay Essentials

4.1 Who Goes First

- If the order of play is not predetermined, use the first applicable method below:
 - The player with fewer first turns so far in the tournament
 - If you forfeit a game before it begins, you are counted as going first in that round and second in the next forfeited game.
 - Byes do not count as either firsts or seconds
 - The player with more second turns
 - The player who draws the tile closest to A (the blank comes before A)
 - Both players must watch the draw

4.2 Shuffling Tiles

- Before the game begins, both players may shuffle tiles for a maximum of 10 seconds.
 - The second player has the right to shuffle last
 - If the second player was not present when tiles were drawn, they can ask for a reshuffle before play starts

4.3 Starting Play

- The player going first [draws tiles](#) first. As soon as they see the face of any tile, their clock must be started.
 - If the second player draws tiles by mistake and the first player also draws without noticing, the first player still goes first.
 - If the first player instead starts the second player's clock, they are considered to have passed. This still counts as a first.

4.4 Leaving the Table

- If you need to leave during the game:
 - Make a play
 - Start your opponent's clock
 - Record the cumulative score
 - Do not draw new tiles
- If your opponent plays while you are gone:
 - They start your clock
 - They record the cumulative score
 - They do not draw new tiles
 - When you return:
 - Stop the clock
 - Your opponent shows you their play
 - Draw your tiles
 - Your opponent starts your clock once you've seen your first new tile
 - You have 5 seconds to hold or challenge
- If a Director asks you to leave the table during a game:
 - If it's your turn:
 - Stop the clock
 - Both players place tiles face down until you return and resume play
 - If it's your opponent's turn:
 - They make their play
 - They stop the clock
 - They place any remaining tiles face down
 - They do not draw tiles until you return and accept the play
- If your opponent draws (n) tiles while you are absent:
 - Before considering any challenge, expose n+2 (if possible) of their tiles (both on the rack and any new unracked tiles)
 - You have one minute to decide which tiles to put back in the bag

- If you then successfully challenge, your opponent removes the play and returns the tiles to their rack.
- If the play is accepted or valid, your opponent draws new tiles.
- If you make a play before discovering the violation, there is no penalty.

4.5 Taking Turns

- Players alternate turns. On your turn, you must do one of the following:
 - Place tiles on the board to form words
 - See [Completing a Turn](#) for correct procedure
 - [Exchange tiles](#) (if there are at least 7 tiles in the bag)
 - [Pass your turn](#) without making a play

4.6 Completing a Turn

- To complete your turn properly, follow this sequence:
 - Record your opponent's play and score (strongly recommended)
 - Record opponent's cumulative score (mandatory unless tile bag is empty)
 - Confirm cumulative score with opponent (optional - may only be done on your own clock)
 - If not passing or exchanging, place your tiles on the board
 - Designate any blanks
 - Announce your score
 - Start your opponent's clock
 - Record your play and its score (strongly recommended)
 - Record your cumulative score (mandatory unless the bag is empty)
 - Wait 5 seconds to give your opponent the opportunity to hold or challenge
 - Draw replacement tiles
 - Track played tiles (optional)
- Failing to follow this sequence can result in delays and possible penalties.
- Starting your opponent's clock signals the end of your turn.
 - If you start your opponent's clock by accident or without completing your turn properly and your opponent has not drawn tiles, your turn does not end
 - Your clock can be restarted, and your opponent may receive an extra minute of time
 - If you draw replacement tiles before starting your opponent's clock, your turn is considered complete
 - Your opponent has 15 seconds to hold or challenge the play

4.7 Placing Tiles

- When you play tiles:
 - All tiles must form one main word of at least two letters
 - The main word must be horizontal (left to right) or vertical (top to bottom)
 - If it is the first word, it must cover the center square

- If the word does not cover the center square, it can be challenged off the board.
- If the word stands, the centre square remains available as a double-word score.
- If it is not the first word, it must connect to tiles already on the board
- Any new crosswords formed must also be valid words

Establishing Orientation

- The first valid play establishes the orientation of the tiles.
 - The orientation of the tiles and the bonus square lettering should match
 - If it doesn't, the tiles may be moved to their equivalent matching position before the next valid play.
 - After this, the tiles may not be reoriented

Misoriented or Poorly Positioned Tiles

- If you place tiles in the wrong orientation:
 - Your opponent may ask you to fix them
 - Your clock may be restarted while you adjust them
- If a tile is not fully in a square, it's considered to be in the square it mostly covers.
- If a tile is played facedown, you must flip it faceup in the same square.
- These are minor infractions if repeated.

4.8 Illegal Plays

- The following plays are illegal and players must announce them as soon as they are discovered:
 - **Disconnected tiles** or words that don't join with valid plays on the board
 - Two separate plays (playing more than one string of tiles) in one turn
 - Moving/Removing tiles from previous turns without returning them to their original positions before finishing your turn
 - Playing from an overdrawn rack
- If you make an illegal play and your opponent hasn't yet played and restarted your clock:
 - Remove the illegally placed tiles and restore any tiles that were moved from their original position
 - Score zero for the turn
 - If you drew new tiles and you have **not** combined them with your rack:
 - Show the newly-drawn tiles to your opponent
 - Return the newly-drawn tiles to the bag
 - Return the illegally-played tiles to your rack
 - If you drew new tiles and you have combined them with your rack:
 - Complete the overdraw procedure
 - The illegal tiles count as your tiles but are not mixed with newly drawn tiles for the purpose of the overdraw procedure (i.e. your opponent doesn't select from them)

- If your opponent has already played and restarted your clock:
 - You still score zero for the turn
 - Remove any disconnected tiles and return them to the bag
- If an illegal play is discovered but you don't know who is responsible:
 - Remove any disconnected tiles and return them to the bag
 - Continue the game with no penalties
- If you notice disconnected tiles within 15 seconds of the end of the game, and you haven't yet finalized the results:
 - Follow the appropriate procedure above
 - Resume the game

4.9 Scoring a Play

- To score your play:
 - Add the points for each letter in every word formed
 - Apply any **newly covered** letter bonus squares (double or triple letter)
 - Apply any **newly covered** word bonus squares (double or triple word)
 - The center square counts as a double word score
 - If you play all 7 tiles in one turn, add a 50-point bingo bonus

4.10 Playing the Blank Tile

- When you play a blank tile, you must **clearly** designate its letter **in writing**. Do this by:
 - Writing the chosen letter in capital letters OR cleanly circling the letter on a blank-designation slip
 - Show the slip to your opponent and return it to its place in front of the clock
- You must write the designation **before** starting your opponent's clock.
 - If you forget, your opponent may ask you to clarify and restart your clock to do so.
 - You may stop the clock to look for a blank slip if none is available
 - If a blank slip shows a previous designation that should not be there, stop the clock and correct the slip.
- If you use two blanks in one word, the recorded blanks must match the order of the letters as they appear in the word.
 - Example: If you play R?TAI?S and circle N in the first set of letters and E in the second on the blank designation slip, or if you write down N and E as the blanks, the word is read as RnTAleS and the opponent may challenge.
 - If the blank slip doesn't clearly indicate which is the first or second blank, the first blank is the topmost or leftmost letter recorded.
- Verbally declaring the blank without writing it down counts as no designation.
 - If the game proceeds without written designation, any subsequent disputes will be resolved by the Director, who will ignore any claim of spoken designation.
 - Verbally declaring one letter while designating another is suspicious behaviour.

- If the blank is not designated or is unclear, an adjudicated challenge involving the blank may be withdrawn
 - The Director will restart the offending player's clock and request clear designation.
 - If the opponent disputes the designation, the Director will make a reasonable designation.
 - When their clock is started, the opponent may then withdraw the challenge, or challenge any word formed by the blank
- Once a subsequent play has been made, you can only ask for blank clarification or designation on your own time.

4.11 Exchanging

You may decide to exchange some or all of your tiles instead of making a play. This can be done **only if there are at least 7 tiles remaining in the bag.**

- To exchange:
 1. Announce that you are exchanging tiles
 2. Place the tiles facedown on the table
 - If exchanging all 7, you may leave on rack to easily return to the bag
 3. Start your opponent's clock
 4. Draw new tiles and keep them separate from your rack
 5. Return the old tiles to the bag and mix them
 6. Place the new tiles on your rack

Additional Guidelines:

- If the number you announce is different than the number of tiles you placed on the table, you must exchange **only —and all of—** the tiles you placed on the table
- If you return the old tiles to the bag **before drawing** new tiles, you assume the risk of redrawing them.
- If you forget to put the old tiles in the bag during the exchange procedure, make sure both players see the old tiles before putting them back in the bag.
- You may not change your mind and decide to keep tiles that you have put on the table once you've started your opponent's clock.
- Both players are responsible for ensuring exchanges are done correctly. If uncertainty or dispute arises, stop the clock and call a Director.

4.11(a) Exchanging with Fewer than 7 Tiles in the Bag

- If you attempt to exchange with fewer than 7 tiles in the bag and you've started your opponent's clock, stop the clock to resolve the situation as follows:
 - If you haven't put new tiles on your rack or original tiles back in the bag, your turn counts as a pass:
 - Show your opponent the new tiles and return them to the bag
 - Put the original tiles back on your rack

- If you've put at least one new tile on your rack OR at least one original tile into the bag:
 - Your opponent gets to see all the tiles on your rack, the tiles to be traded, and the tiles in the bag
 - they don't show you the tiles in the bag
 - They then have one minute to choose which 7 you will keep and which to put back in the bag.
- Score zero (illegal play) and start your opponent's clock
- If your opponent has already played and restarted your clock, subtract 30 from your score

4.11(b) Exchanging from an Overdrawn Rack

When discussing overdraws, x always = the number of tiles in excess of a legal rack (7).

- If you attempt to exchange from a rack with more than 7 tiles, stop the clock and resolve as follows:::
 - If you haven't drawn new tiles yet:
 - Apply the appropriate [overdraw procedure](#)
 - If you've drawn new tiles but haven't returned any old tiles to the bag:
 - Your opponent reveals $x+2$ from all your tiles combined
 - They return x tiles to the bag
 - If you returned any tiles to the bag:
 - Redraw the number of tiles you threw back
 - Your opponent reveals $x+2$ from all your tiles combined
 - They return x tiles to the bag
- Score zero for the turn (illegal play) and start your opponent's clock

4.12 Passing

- To pass:
 - Announce that you are passing
 - Start your opponent's clock
 - Score zero points

4.13 Board Etiquette

- During your turn, you may rotate the board to any angle you prefer.
- While your opponent is playing:
 - Keep your hands and arms clear of the board
 - Do not touch the tiles or the board
 - Do not speak unnecessarily
- If your opponent asks where you played a word, you must show them unless your clock is still running.

4.14 Handling Tiles

For maximum transparency and proper etiquette when handling tiles during a game:

- Never bring tiles or the tile bag below the plane of the table.
- Tiles must remain on your rack when not in play (drawing, making moves, etc)
- Your opponent must always be able to see your tiles (except for the brief moments when they are being moved during play).
- Do not use the board as a workspace to decide on plays.
 - You are allowed to change your play before starting your opponent's clock

4.15 Counting and Drawing Tiles

- When you draw tiles:
 - Show your open palm to your opponent before reaching into the bag
 - Hold the tile bag away from your line of sight but still visible to your opponent
 - Make sure your opponent can see your face and hands while drawing
 - Place drawn tiles either facedown on the table (recommended) or directly on your rack
 - It is better to place tiles on the table and verify the count before mixing with your other tiles to minimize overdraw risk and penalties
 - Do not leave drawn tiles in your hands longer than necessary.
- A tile is considered drawn when your hand has completely left the bag.
- When you count tiles remaining in the bag:
 - Use the same procedure as drawing
 - Tiles remain in the bag while counting
 - Do not announce how many tiles are left
 - The player on turn always has priority access to the bag and may:
 - Request the bag immediately OR
 - Stop the clock and wait for the other player to finish

4.16 Tracking

- You may track which tiles have been played and which remain.
 - Tracking sheets are optional but must not contain any memory aids.
- If you track tiles before drawing replacement tiles, and this delays your opponent, the Director may warn you.
 - Repeated delays can result in your opponent receiving extra time

5. Special Situations

This section covers the most common special situations. If anything unusual happens that is not described here, stop the clock and call the Director, who will make a fair ruling.

5.1 Minor Infractions

- Minor mistakes that don't affect the game outcome (e.g., playing a tile slightly askew) are called "minor infractions."
- After **three** minor infractions that you immediately bring to your opponent's attention, you can call the Director and request either:
 - One extra minute of time
 - One minute deducted from your opponent's time
- Examples of minor infractions:
 - Failing to announce a score
 - Misoriented tiles
 - Repeated scoring errors
 - Delaying the clock (e.g. tracking tiles before starting opponent's clock or drawing replacement tiles)

Note: Knowingly announcing or confirming an incorrect score is considered cheating. The Director must evaluate whether such misstatements are intentional or accidental. (See [Appendix C](#) for guidance).

5.2 Overdraws

- An overdraw happens when you draw more tiles than needed.
- If anyone notices that a player has more than 7 tiles, they must tell the players or Director right away.
- If you notice you have overdrawn:
 - Stop the clock immediately and inform your opponent
 - Stop any drawing in progress (either player).
 - Begin the appropriate overdraw procedure below
 - See [Appendix B](#) for Overdraw Flowchart

5.2(a) Standard Overdraw Procedure (More than 7 tiles in the Bag):

In all cases: x = the number of extra tiles drawn in excess of a legal rack (7).
Tiles are considered **combined** if any new tiles are put on the rack or next to old tiles.

First

- If you have **not combined** new tiles with old tiles **and**:
 - You were supposed to draw **1** tile:
 - Your opponent reveals all **new** tiles
 - You were supposed to draw **more than 1** tile:
 - Your opponent reveals $x+2$ of the **new** tiles
- If you **combined** new and old tiles:
 - Your opponent reveals $x+2$ from **all** your tiles (new + old)

Next

- Your opponent chooses which of the revealed tiles you will keep.
- Your opponent returns the other revealed tiles to the bag.
 - If your opponent takes longer than 15 seconds to decide, you may start their clock.
 - Once they decide, they can stop the clock to complete the procedure
- Put the remaining tiles back on your rack.
- Both players can opt to mix the tiles in the bag before resuming play.
- Restart the clock for the player on turn.
 - If your opponent was mid-draw, they now complete their draw

5.2(b) Overdraw with 7 or Fewer Tiles in the Bag

Overdrawing when the bag is nearly empty can give away crucial endgame information and warrants a harsher penalty than the standard overdraw procedure.

- If your overdraw is discovered on your opponent's turn, follow the standard overdraw procedure.
- If your overdraw is discovered on your turn:
 - Your opponent chooses $x+2$ of your tiles
 - If not combined, opponent chooses from new tiles only
 - If combined, opponent chooses from all tiles
 - Instead of revealing them to you, they combine the tiles with their own.
 - Your opponent has one minute to decide which tiles to give you and which to return to the bag.
 - They do not show you the tile(s) they are returning to the bag.

5.2(c) Playing From an Overdrawn Rack

- If you make a play from a rack with more than 7 tiles and your opponent has not yet played:
 - Remove the play (illegal play)
 - Score zero
 - Apply the relevant overdraw procedure
 - The illegal tiles count as your tiles but are not mixed with newly drawn tiles for the purpose of the overdraw procedure (i.e. your opponent doesn't select from them)
- If your opponent has played:
 - Score zero for the illegal play
 - Leave the tiles on the board

5.2(d) Revealing Too Many While Applying Overdraw Procedure

- If your opponent reveals too many tiles while applying the overdraw procedure, you get to choose which of the extra tiles to keep
 - e.g. If your opponent should have revealed 2 tiles but revealed 4, you may now choose 2 of those tiles to keep.

- The remaining tiles are placed facedown on the table.
- Your opponent blindly chooses (doesn't reveal) the tiles to give you / return.
- Neither player sees the tiles being returned to the bag.

5.3 Underdraws

- As soon as you notice an underdraw, alert your opponent.
- The player then draws the tiles needed to replenish their rack.

Playing from an Underdrawn Rack

- If you accidentally play from a rack with fewer than 7 tiles, there is no penalty.
- The play stands and you simply draw the correct number of replenishment tiles.
 - If a bingo bonus was erroneously applied, subtract 50 to correct the score.

Underdrawing Near the End of the Game

- If you underdraw and your opponent's draw hasn't left enough tiles for you to replenish your rack:
 - If your opponent has not mixed the newly drawn tiles, they return them to the bag. You complete your draw.
 - If the opponent has mixed the tiles but has not completed another turn, they choose the correct number of tiles from their rack to give to you.
 - If your opponent has already completed their next play (after the play that emptied the bag), there is no correction.
- Both players are responsible for drawing correctly and monitoring the tile bag. (i.e. You don't have to tell your opponent if they fail to draw the last tile in the bag)

5.4 Loose or Spilled Tiles

As long as there are at least 7 tiles remaining in the bag:

- If tiles accidentally spill from the bag when neither player is drawing, ensure both players see the tiles before returning them to the bag.
- If loose tiles are discovered on or near the table, both players must confirm if those tiles (or any others) came off the board in play.
 - If so, put them back on the board where they belong
 - If both players agree that the tiles did not come from the board, return the tiles to the bag.

Spilling Tiles While Drawing

- If tiles accidentally fall out of the bag while you're drawing replenishment tiles, they are considered part of your draw
 - If the number of spilled tiles is more than you need, place them facedown
 - Your opponent mixes them
 - You draw the correct number
 - Both players see the tiles being returned to the bag.

Loose Tiles When The Bag is Empty

- If loose tiles are found after the results have been finalized (results submitted or tally slips initialled by both players), ignore them.
- If loose tiles are found before the results have been finalized:
 - Call the Director
 - Try to decide together who should have drawn them
 - If you agree who should have drawn the tiles, that player gets them and play resumes without penalty.
 - If you can't agree, the Director decides which player, if any, gets the tiles.
- If the tile(s) are found during an outplay challenge and they should have been drawn by the player who went out, the challenge may be rescinded.

Spilling Tiles Leaving 7 or Fewer in the Bag

- If you spill tiles leaving 7 or fewer tiles in the bag during your opponent's turn, there is no penalty.
 - Show your opponent the tiles before returning them to the bag
- If you spill tiles during your turn:
 - Your opponent adds those tiles to their rack
 - They have one minute to choose which tiles to keep / return to the bag
 - They don't show you which tiles they are returning to the bag

Tiles in the Bag at the End of the Game

- If you find tiles in the bag at the end of the game:
 - If the results have been finalized (results submitted or tally slips initialled by both players), there is no corrective action.
- If the results have not been finalized:
 - The player who should have drawn the tile(s) gets them
 - If both players have at least one tile, the game continues

Tiles from an Adjacent Game

- If you notice you or your opponent has a tile from an adjacent game:
 - Stop the clock
 - Return the tile to the correct bag
 - Replace with a tile from your own bag if appropriate/available.
 - Restart the clock.
- If you have made a play with tiles from another game and the error is caught before you've drawn replacement tiles:
 - Stop the clock
 - Remove the play
 - Return the tiles to the proper bag

- Draw replacement tiles from your own bag if appropriate/available.
 - Restart the clock.
 - Make another play
- If you've made a play with tiles from another game and you've drawn replacement tiles:
 - Complete the relevant overdraw procedure.
 - Note that tiles returned from the original play count as your tiles but are not mixed with newly drawn tiles for the purpose of the overdraw procedure (i.e. your opponent doesn't select from them)
 - Restart the clock.
 - Make another play.
- If the error is caught after your opponent completes their turn, the Director determines how to restore the correct tile distribution and replace tiles.
 - If obvious which tiles should be removed and which bag to return them to, the Director will do so.
 - They will then replace with corresponding tiles as available from the following in this order:
 - The correct bag
 - The players' racks
 - If the Director determines that one player is solely responsible for the error, their rack will be used first.
 - If not, neither rack should be used.
 - A neutral bag
 - If the Director can't tell which tiles came from where, they will check the tile distribution of each affected set and try to correct them.
 - During the process, the Director will avoid revealing the contents of players' racks to their opponents.

5.5 Improperly Returning Tiles to the Bag

- If you improperly return tiles to the bag:
 - Stop the clock
 - Your opponent selects 2 tiles from your rack (or 1 if there is only 1 tile on your rack)
 - Your opponent also draws $r+2$ tiles from the bag, where r = the number of tiles you improperly returned to the bag
 - If there are not enough, they will draw all the tiles from the bag
 - Your opponent exposes the tiles to common view
 - They have 1 minute to choose which tiles you keep
 - If they need more time, you can start their clock
 - They return the remaining tiles to the bag.
 - If it's your turn and there are 7 or fewer tiles remaining in the bag, complete the [Overdrawing with 7 or Fewer Tiles](#) procedure before resuming play.
 - Otherwise, start your opponent's clock to resume play.
- Improperly returning tiles to the bag is suspicious behaviour and the Director will apply harsher penalties if they suspect cheating.

5.6 Drawing Out of Order

- Do not deliberately draw tiles out of order.
- If your opponent draws before you:
 - There is no penalty or corrective action if at least 7 tiles remain in the bag
 - You should draw your tiles as soon as you realize the error

Drawing Out of Order with 7 or Fewer Tiles in the Bag

- If you draw before your opponent and there are too few tiles remaining for them to replenish their rack, the [standard overdraw procedure](#) applies.

6. Holds and Challenges

6.1 Holding a Play

- If you are considering whether to challenge your opponent's play:
 - Clearly call "**hold**" once your clock is started and before your opponent draws new tiles
 - **Tip:** Secure the tile bag to keep your opponent from drawing new tiles for up to 15 seconds while you think
 - **Fast bagging or Flash drawing:** If your opponent draws within 5 seconds, leaving you without enough time to hold or challenge, you may call a Director to restore that opportunity
 - Your clock keeps running while you decide if you will challenge
 - You may record your opponent's score while you are deciding

Provisional / Courtesy Tiles

- **After 15 seconds**, your opponent may announce and draw **courtesy tiles**
 - They must keep these tiles separate from their rack until the challenge is complete or the play is accepted
- If you decide not to challenge, clearly indicate that you're accepting the play (say "OK / I accept"; hand over tile bag, etc.)

6.2 Challenging a Play

- If you decide to challenge any word your opponent has just played:
 - State that you are challenging
 - You do not need to hold a play before challenging
 - Stop the clock
 - If the tournament has designated challenge computers:
 - Write the challenged word(s) clearly on a challenge slip
 - Words may be added or removed from the challenge at any time before the play is adjudicated
 - Both players verify the spelling
 - Both players place any racked tiles face down on the table (so opponent can't see tiles during adjudication)

- Walk together to the challenge computer
- Confirm the word judge is set to the correct lexicon
- Type the word(s) you are challenging into the computer or device
 - In NWL, you can challenge any or all words of the play at once
 - In CSW, you risk a penalty for each word challenged
- Your opponent verifies the word(s) entered and presses the adjudication key (e.g. TAB or JUDGE)

Improper Lookups

- If you are challenging more than one word and you enter them separately:
 - No penalty is imposed if your opponent contributed to the error
 - If it was solely your error and the word is invalid, you lose 10 points.
 - If the error is noticed before all words are checked but you have an “unacceptable” adjudication, you must not enter any more words

Outcome:

- If the play is unacceptable (successful challenge):
 - Your opponent removes the play
 - They score zero
 - They wait for you to rerack your tiles
 - They start your clock
- If courtesy tiles were drawn, your opponent shows you the tiles before returning them to the bag
 - If they fail to show you the courtesy tiles, you are entitled to view $x+2$ from the bag (or all remaining if not enough)
- If the play is acceptable (failed challenge):
 - In double challenge, you lose your turn
 - You score zero for the turn
 - Both players rerack their tiles
 - Your opponent draws new tiles
 - Start your opponent's clock once they see a new tile
 - In 5-point challenge, your opponent adds 5 extra points to their score for each word you challenged (standard – but some tournaments use 10 point challenge)
 - You do not lose your turn
 - Rerack your tiles
 - Your opponent starts your clock

6.3 Irregularity Following a Successful Challenge

- If you remove too many or too few tiles from the board after a successful challenge:
 - If you've started your opponent's clock:
 - Correct the error
 - Your opponent is entitled to one extra minute of playing time
 - If your opponent has already made a play:
 - Neutralize the clock

- Correct the error
- Your opponent retakes their turn on the corrected board
- If you have both played a turn after the error, play continues without correcting the board

6.4 Courtesy and Ethical Considerations

- Do not challenge plays before your opponent finishes their turn
- If you say “challenge” but change your mind before stopping the clock, you may withdraw the challenge.
- If you forget to stop the clock, the challenge is binding if you write the word on a challenge slip or move toward word judge

7. Ending the Game

7.1 When the Game Ends

- The game ends when one of the following conditions is met:
 - A player invokes the six-zero rule
 - A player has played all their tiles, bag is empty, and the play is accepted
 - A player has exceeded 10 minutes of overtime
 - A player forfeits or resigns

7.2 The Six-Zero Rule

- If six turns in a row score zero points due to any combination of passes, exchanges, failed challenges, or illegal plays:
 - Either player may stop the clock and declare the game over
 - If a scoring play is made before this declaration, the game continues
- Illegal plays involving disconnected tiles only count toward the six-zero rule if the illegal play is discovered before a legal play is made

7.3 Ending the Game with Final Tiles

- When you make your last play:
 - Stop the clock
 - Confirm the tile bag is empty
 - Give your opponent 15 seconds to hold or challenge
 - If your opponent does not act within 15 seconds, the play is accepted, and the game ends
- Your opponent may:
 - Accept the play
 - Hold the play (must be declared within 15 seconds)
 - Restart their clock, which runs until they decide whether to challenge
 - Challenge the play

- Reveal their remaining tiles and agree on the final score
- Do not touch the clock or tiles again until all required paperwork or electronic results submission is complete
- If you forget to stop the clock after the final play, the clock is considered stopped when your opponent reveals their tiles or declares their point value
 - Do not try to force your opponent into overtime by starting an opponent's clock or failing to stop the clock after an outplay
 - A Director will erase time penalties gained in this manner

7.4 Director-Shortened Games

- The Director may end a game that is interfering with tournament function or timing. If this occurs:
 - The Director will issue a warning a few minutes beforehand to give players a chance to finish naturally
 - If the game cannot be completed in that time, each player reduces their scores by the value of their unplayed tiles.

7.5 Adjusting the Final Score

- After the last play:
 - If you went out (played all your tiles):
 - Add twice the total point value of your opponent's unplayed tiles to your score.
 - Your opponent does not subtract their unplayed tiles from their own score.
 - If neither player went out, each player subtracts the value of their unplayed tiles.

7.6 Overtime Penalties

- If you use more than 25 minutes of clock time:
 - You lose 10 points for each minute or part of a minute over.

Example:

- 00:00 = no time penalty
- 00:01 to -01:00 = minus 10 points
- 01:01 to -02:00 = minus 20 points
- 10:00 = minus 100 points
- 10:01 = loss

- If you exceed 10 minutes of overtime:
 - You lose the game
 - Subtract 100 points from your score
 - If your opponent's score is still lower, they increase it so they win by 1 point
 - Ignore unplayed tiles.
 - No recount is allowed

7.7 Recounts

- After the game ends, either player may request a recount if:
 - The request is made within 1 minute of the game ending
 - The results have not been finalized (electronic submission or tally slips signed/initialed by both players)
- Both players must provide their score sheets
- If you choose not to participate:
 - You cannot request a later recount
 - You can only dispute specific mistakes found by your opponent
- Directors may end recounts that are delaying the tournament schedule or where player scoresheets lack appropriate detail to ensure an accurate recount.

7.8 Recording the Game

- At the end of each game:
 - Complete all required paperwork and/or electronic submissions:
 - Verify the final scores
 - Confirm the results as appropriate
 - The only time results can be adjusted once submitted is if the scores were misentered (e.g. scores reversed or different than agreed per tally slips or score sheets). They won't be adjusted for forgotten time penalties, counting errors etc.
 - The winner must submit the results promptly before discussing the game or leaving the tournament area
 - If both players have the same score, the game is a tie and each player receives half a win.
 - The player who went first should submit the results

7.9 Forfeits and Byes

- If you do not show up for a game:
 - You receive a forfeit loss (-50 spread)
 - Your opponent receives a forfeit win (+50 spread)
 - Forfeits are not rated
 - If players and Director agree, you can postpone the game without forfeit (including double-forfeit) and play a rated game when it is convenient for all parties.
- If you have to leave a game and it can't be postponed, you receive a rated loss and your opponent wins:
 - If you are ahead when you leave, your opponent's score is increased so that they win by 50.
 - If you are behind when you leave, 50 points are subtracted from your score
 - The game has begun and is considered a rated game once the first player has drawn at least one tile and the second player is aware of this action.

- If you forfeit or leave a game in progress to ensure a winning prize for yourself or another player, the Director may increase the standard forfeit penalty as they see fit, and may file an Incident Report.
- If you forfeit or leave a game to avoid being annotated or streamed and it is your first violation, standard forfeit procedures apply.
 - Repeated offences are considered Class 1 violations of [NASPA's Code of Conduct](#)
- If you are not assigned an opponent (a bye), you get an automatic win (+50 spread)

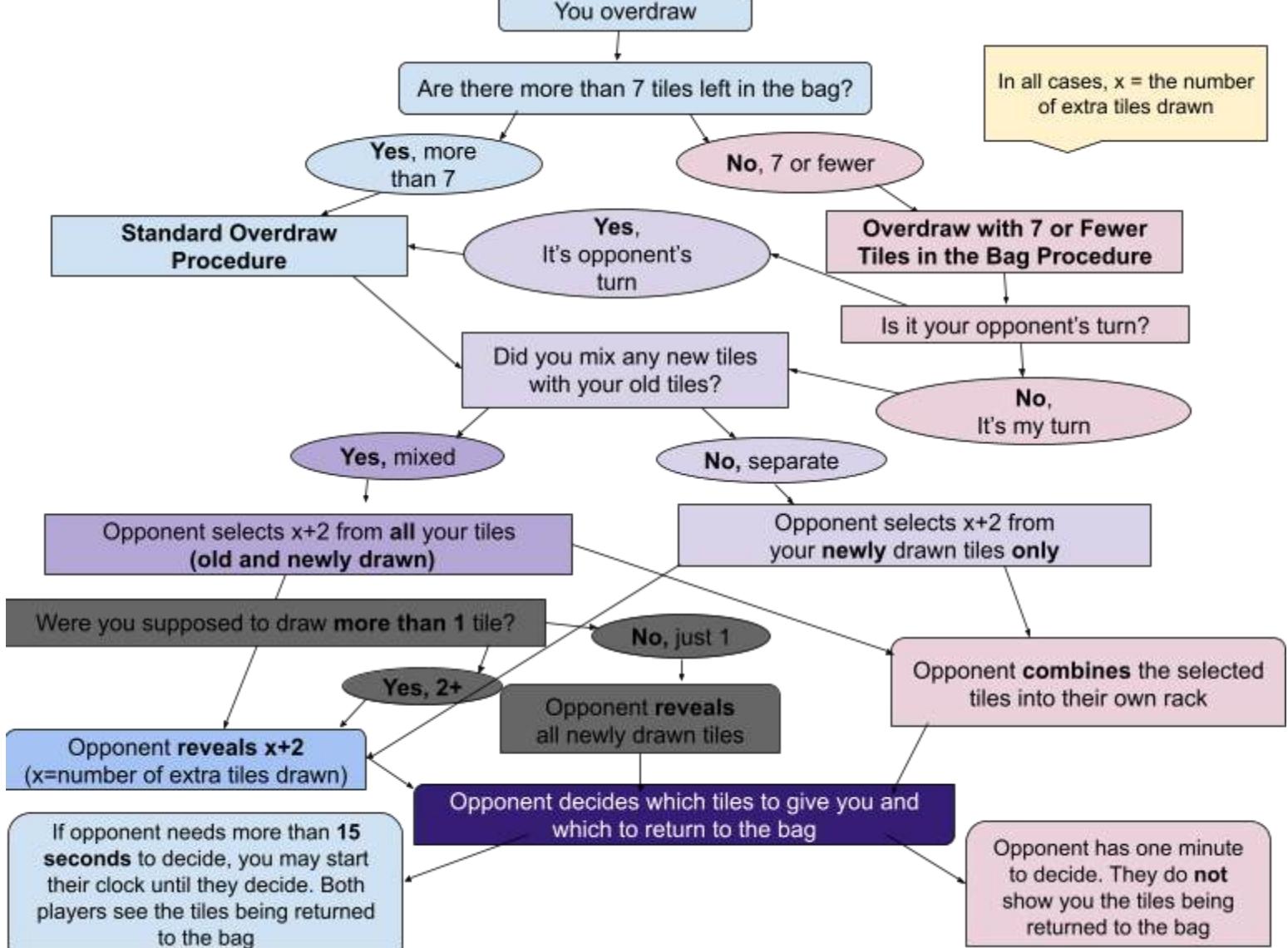
Appendix A

Quick Reference Index

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Bag, Checking	4.15	16	Bag integrity, priority, counting tiles
Blanks	3.11, 4.10	9, 13-14	Designating, using blank slips, order of blanks
Challenges	6.2	22-23	Procedure, adjudication, outcomes
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Disconnected Tiles	4.7	12-13, 24	Illegal play, end of game procedures
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Appendix B

OVERDRAW FLOWCHART



Appendix C

Practical Ways a Director May Infer Intent

Situation	Could Suggest
Player has a history of "mistakes" that always benefit them	Pattern of behavior
The error is egregiously obvious (e.g. claiming 90 points for a 15-point word)	Implausible accident
Player hurries opponent through verification, refuses to check score slip, or covers score	Avoidance
Player challenges a word, loses, and then repeatedly "forgets" penalty	Selective memory
Multiple errors all benefit one player with no visible confusion	Statistical unlikelihood
A player alters the tally slip after the opponent signs it	Tampering (this is serious misconduct)

Note: Context + Consistency + Credibility matter more than any one moment.

What a Director Can Do

1. Pause the game and investigate — ask both players about the sequence of scoring.
2. Check tally slip and score sheets — handwriting, corrections, omissions.
3. Ask about recent scores — see if the error was noticed and overlooked.
4. Document — every error, every ruling.
5. Warn or penalize — even if intent can't be *proven*, negligence can be penalized.

Remember: A Director doesn't need to prove "beyond a reasonable doubt" — this isn't a courtroom. They only need reasonable confidence to act in the best interest of fair play.

Appendix D - Basic Rules

How to Play Scrabble®

Objective: Score the most points by forming words on the board using letter tiles.

In the Box: Board, Racks, 100 tiles, tile bag, scoresheets

Tile Distribution and Point Values:

A ₁	A ₁	B ₃							
B ₃	C ₃	C ₃	D ₂	D ₂	D ₂	D ₂	E ₁	E ₁	E ₁
E ₁	E ₁	F ₄							
F ₄	G ₂	G ₂	G ₂	H ₄	H ₄	I ₁	I ₁	I ₁	I ₁
I ₁	J ₈	K ₅	L ₁	L ₁	L ₁				
L ₁	M ₃	M ₃	N ₁	N ₁	O ₁				
O ₁	P ₃	P ₃	Q ₁₀	R ₁	R ₁				
R ₁	S ₁	S ₁	S ₁	S ₁					
T ₁	U ₁	U ₁	U ₁	U ₁					
V ₄	V ₄	W ₄	W ₄	X ₈	Y ₄	Y ₄	Z ₁₀		

A₁-9 B₃-2 C₃-2 D₂-4 E₁-12
F₄-2 G₂-3 H₄-2 I₁-9 J₈-1
K₅-1 L₁-4 M₃-3 N₁-6 O₁-8
P₃-2 Q₁₀-1 R₁-6 S₁-4 T₁-6
U₁-4 V₄-4 W₄-2 X₈-1 Y₄-2
Z₁₀-1 Blanks₀-2

Setup

1. Place the board between the players.
2. Put all the tiles in the bag and mix well.
3. Each player draws one tile.
4. The player whose tile is closest to A goes first. (A blank tile beats all letters.)
5. Return tiles to the bag and reshuffle.
6. Each player draws 7 tiles and places them on their rack, hidden from view.

Playing Words

First Play

- Must be at least two letters
- Must run left to right or top to bottom
- Must cover the center ★ square

Later Plays

- Must connect to existing tiles on the board
- All tiles placed in a turn must form one continuous line
- Any new words formed (including crosswords) must be valid

The Board

The Scrabble board is a 15×15 grid.

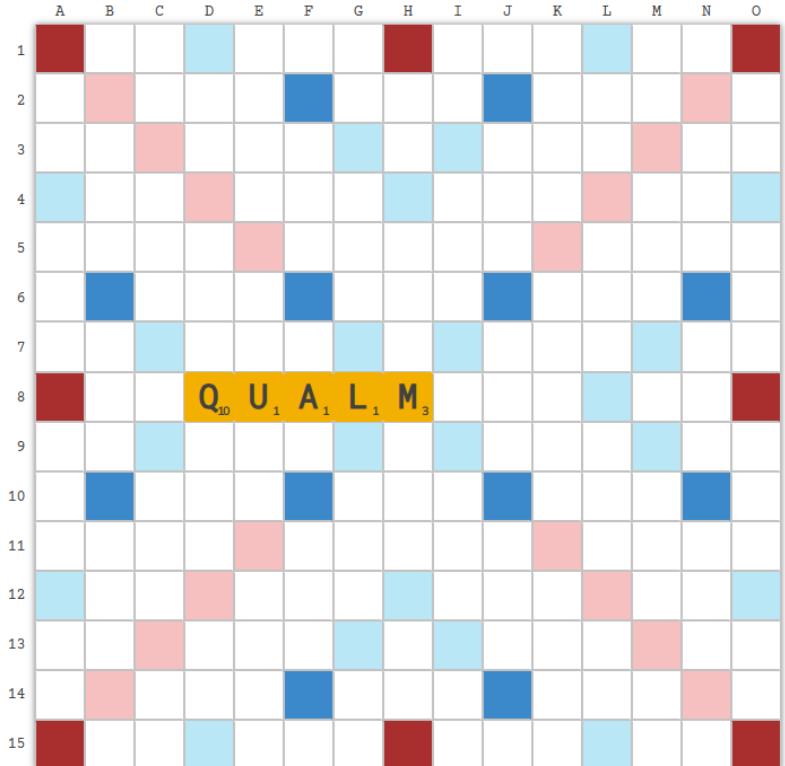
The rows (horizontal) are numbered 1-15, and the columns (vertical) are lettered A-O.

This makes it easier to reference plays.

In this example, QUALM is placed horizontally on Row 8 with the Q on the Double Letter 4 squares in. (M is on center \star square).

Therefore, the word's position is 8D.

The same word played vertically would be referenced as D8 (Starts on the 8th square in column D).



Premium Squares

3W			2L				3W			2L			2L		3W
	2W				3L				3L					2W	
		2W				2L		2L						2W	
2L			2W			2L		2L					2W		2L
				2W					2W						
	3L				3L				3L				3L		
		2L				2L		2L					2L		
3W			2L				★			2L			2L		3W
	2L				2L		2L		2L				2L		
		3L				3L			3L				3L		
			2W					2W							
2L			2W				2L		2L				2L		
				2W			2L		2L				2W		
2W					3L				3L					2W	
3W			2L				3W			2L			2L		3W

Colored squares on the board indicate special multipliers:

Double Letter (DL) — doubles the letter's value

Triple Letter (TL) — triples the letter's value

Double Word (DW) — doubles the word's score. The center \star square is a Double Word Score.

Triple Word (TW) — triples the word's score

Premium squares apply only for the play that first covers them.

Scoring

1. Add the values of the letters in each word formed.
2. Apply letter bonuses, then word bonuses.
3. Score all words created on the turn.
4. Add the total to your score.

Using all 7 tiles in one turn earns a 50-point bonus.

Blank Tiles

- A blank may represent any letter.
- The player must declare which letter it represents.
- Once placed, it remains that letter for the rest of the game.
- Blank tiles score 0 points.

Drawing Tiles

After scoring, draw tiles to refill your rack to 7 tiles, if possible.

Exchanging Tiles

If there are 7 or more tiles left in the bag, you may:

- Exchange any number of tiles
- Draw the same number of replacements

Exchanging uses your turn and scores zero points.

Passing

You may pass instead of playing or exchanging.

Passing scores zero points.

Challenges

Players should agree on challenge rules and dictionary before the game begins.

Common rule:

- If a challenged word is invalid, it is removed and scores zero.
- If valid, the challenger loses their next turn.

Ending the Game

The game ends when:

- One player uses all their tiles and the bag is empty, or
- All players pass twice in a row (Box Rule only - see [7.2](#))

Final Scoring - Box Rules

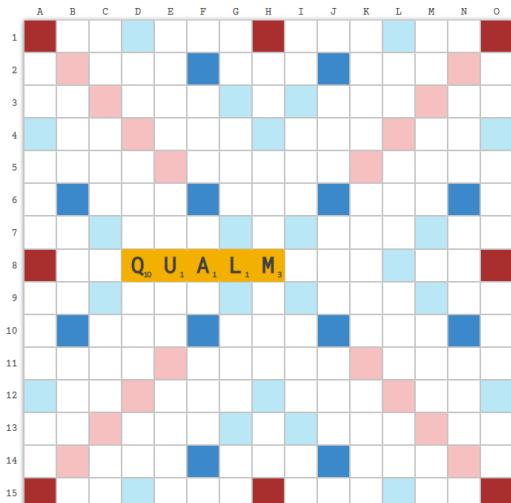
- If one player goes out (uses all their tiles), add the value of opponent's unplayed tiles to that player's score and subtract it from the opponent's score
 - Tournament play doubles value and adds to score of player going out ([7.5](#))
- If no player goes out, each subtracts the value of their own unplayed tiles.
- Highest score wins.

Rule Clarifications

- The same word can be played more than once in a game.
- In some games, neither player uses all their tiles. In this case the game continues until all possible moves have been made or players have passed twice in a row.
 - Both players subtract the total of tile values remaining on their rack.

Figure 1 — First Play

The first word must be at least two letters long and must cover the center ★ square.



In this example, the M is on the center ★ square, and the Q is on the Double Letter (DL) square.

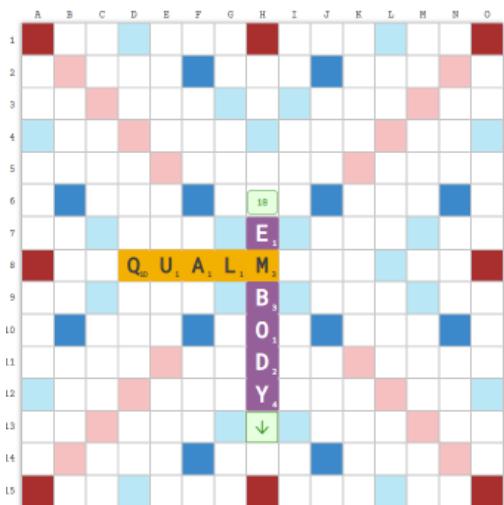
To score, first count any premium letter values:
(Q) $10 \times 2 = 20$.

Then add the other letter values: (Q) 20 + (U) 1 + (A) 1 + (L) 1 + (M) 3 = 26,

Next, apply premium word squares: (Word) 26 x 2, since the center square is a Double Word (DW) square.

The total score for the first play is 52.

Figures 2, 3, 4 — Valid Word Placement



All tiles placed in a turn must form one continuous word in a straight line and connect to existing tiles.

You can play through, perpendicular to, or parallel to any word on the board.

You can also extend an existing word (e.g. add ING to WALK to make WALKING).

Any new letter combinations you make with your play must be valid words or they can be challenged off the board.

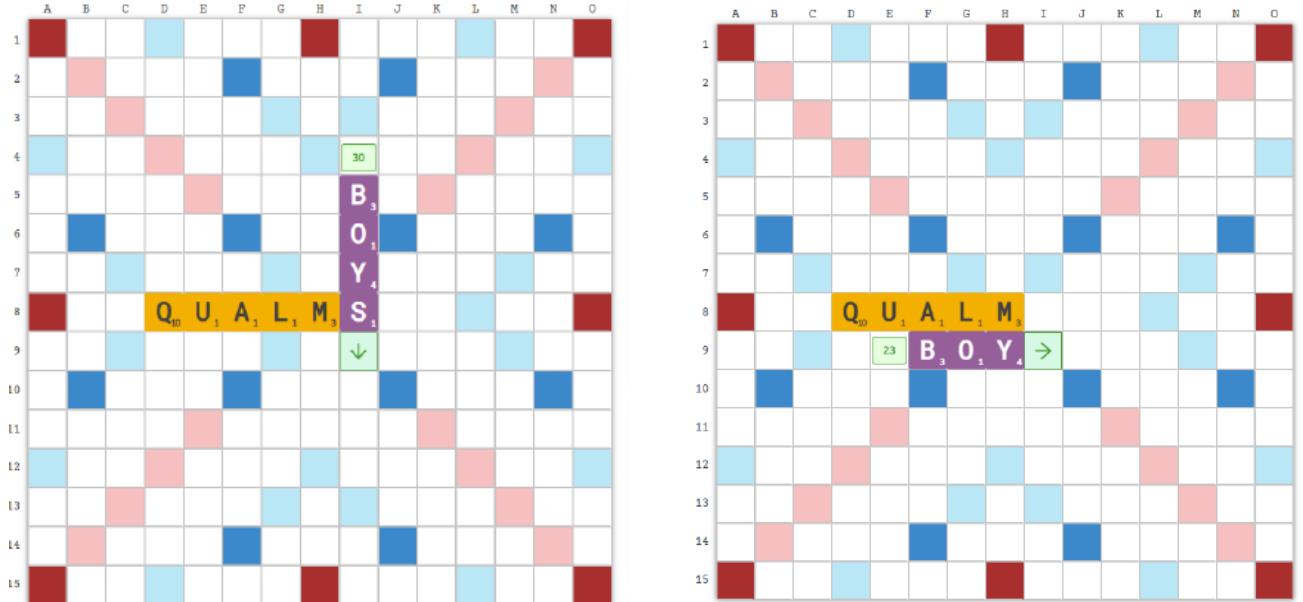
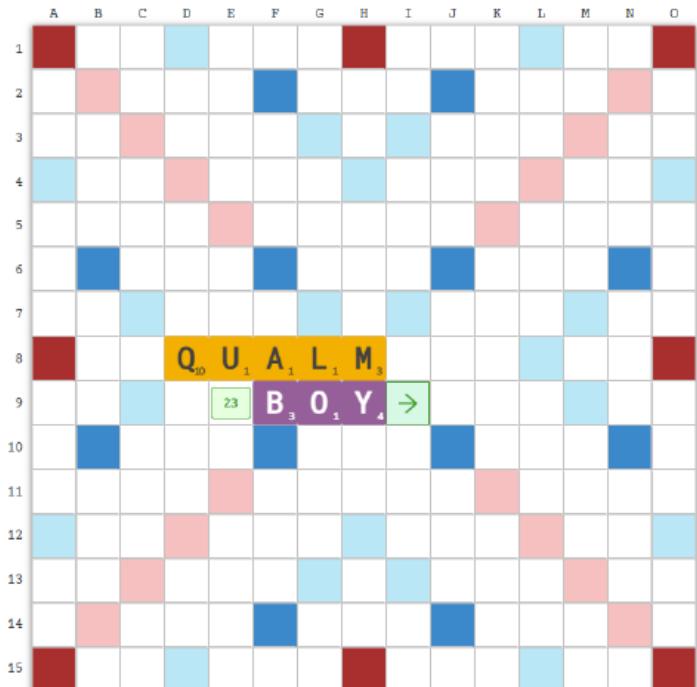


Figure 5 — Scoring Multiple Words



When a play creates more than one word, score each word separately and add the totals together.

Here, the words BOY, AB, LO, and MY are being formed.

$$\mathbf{BOY} = (B)3 + (O)1 \times 2 \text{ [for DL]} + (Y)4 = 9$$

$$\mathbf{AB} = (A)1 + (B)3 = 4$$

$$\mathbf{LO} = (L)1 + (O)1 \times 2 \text{ [for DL]} = 3$$

$$\mathbf{MY} = (M)3 + (Y)4 = 7$$

Total for the play is **9 + 4 + 3 + 7 = 23**