

World English-Language Scrabble® Players' Association (WESPA)

Game Rules

Preamble

The WESPA Game Rules are intended for use in international English-language Scrabble® tournaments. They establish international standards designed to facilitate smooth play between players whose domestic norms may differ. These Rules apply at the World Scrabble® Championship and at tournaments organised and run by WESPA. Their use is also strongly encouraged at all other tournaments with a significant degree of international participation.

If any situation arises during tournament play that is not covered by these Rules, or if any interpretation of these Rules proves controversial or cannot be agreed upon by the players concerned, then the Tournament Director's interpretation and ruling will be final. The Tournament Director should determine factual disputes upon the balance of probabilities, and is entitled to take into account all relevant information in reaching a decision. The Tournament Director should refer any instance of contested interpretations of these Rules to the WESPA Rules Committee for consideration.

Part 1 - Equipment

1.1 Standard Rules

The WESPA Game Rules apply in addition to the standard Scrabble® Rules ('Standard Rules') issued by the commercial game publisher. In the event of any discrepancy the WESPA Game Rules take precedence. The Standard Rules as at June 2009 are listed in the Appendix. These may be reissued from time to time.

1.2 The Dictionary

The official dictionary or word list is endorsed by WESPA in consultation with the WESPA Dictionary Committee. It may be changed from time to time. As at January 2009, the official word list is the HarperCollins SCRABBLE® Tournament & Club Word List (2007 edition).

1.3 The Scrabble® Set

1.3.1 Tile Distribution

It is the responsibility of both players to check before the game starts that the set contains the correct number and distribution of tiles. Under no circumstances may corrections be made once the game has started.

1.3.2 The Tiles

- (a) Tiles with a smooth letter face are acceptable for tournament play, and should always be used where possible.
- (b) Tiles without a smooth letter face are unacceptable for tournament play unless the Tournament Director expressly approves their use.
- (c) Players may only use their own set of tiles if the tournament organisers have not made enough sets available, or if the sets available at the tournament are of inferior quality.
- (d) Some sets have distinguishing identification marks, such as stickers, attached to the backs of the tiles. Such marks are acceptable only if they are uniform across the complete set of tiles.
- (e) Some sets have irregularities caused by detachment from plastic moulding. Such irregularities, whether visible or tangible, are not desired. Sets exhibiting these irregularities, especially on the top edges of tiles, should not be used where sets free from the irregularities are available.
- (f) The Tournament Director will resolve any dispute arising over the choice of tiles, preferring tiles that best achieve both tactile and visual indistinguishability.

1.3.3 The Board

- (a) Boards used in tournament play should be rigid. Folding boards are not suitable unless they can be made rigid for play. Boards should have indentations or ridges to prevent the sliding of tiles. The playing grid should be square, with each edge measuring (as a general guide) between 33 and 35cm.
- (b) Where there is a choice of boards, priority is given to boards that may be moved to face the player on move with minimal disturbance to items on the playing table. The order of precedence is:
 - (i) boards mounted on circular turntables that revolve entirely within their own area ('round boards');
 - (ii) boards mounted on non-circular turntables that revolve primarily within their own area;
 - (iii) square or rectangular revolving boards;
 - (iv) other (non-revolving) boards with indentations.
- (c) Organisers must allow the use of round boards, and are encouraged to provide tables capable of accommodating them.
- (d) Boards that do not hide a player's view of the opponent's rack are preferred.

- (e) The Tournament Director will resolve any dispute arising over the choice of board.

1.3.4 Other Equipment

- (a) Players may use any rack they wish in tournament play. However, the number of tiles on the rack must be clearly visible to the opponent.
- (b) Tile bags used in tournament play must comfortably accommodate (simultaneously) the set of 100 tiles and a player's hand.
- (c) This Rule must be read in conjunction with Rule 1.3.5 (State of Equipment).

1.3.5 State of Equipment

- (a) All equipment in the Scrabble® set must be in an acceptable state of repair.
- (b) 'An acceptable state of repair' means:
 - (i) for tiles: clean, legible, not overly worn or faded, hygienic;
 - (ii) for boards: smoothly rotating (if applicable), not overly glary, free from excessively distracting background designs;
 - (iii) for tile bags: opaque, not too worn, of an appropriate size and design.
- (c) Subsection (b) is not exhaustive, and the Tournament Director will resolve any dispute arising over the state of the equipment.

1.3.6 Varying the Equipment

WESPA recognises that local exigency may at times require departure from the provisions in Rules 1.3.2-1.3.5 (for instance, where round or rigid boards are unavailable or the playing tables cannot accommodate them, or where smooth tiles are unavailable). However, tournament organisers should make every effort to avoid this.

1.4 The Timer

1.4.1 Checking the Timer

It is the responsibility of both players to agree that the timer is correctly set to the specified time limit, and that both of the timer's displays are working properly.

1.4.2 Precedence

Where there is a choice of timers, the order of precedence is:

- (a) digital timers capable of
 - (i) counting down from the specified time limit to 00.00,
 - (ii) displaying overtime in minutes and seconds in a count-up fashion (digital timers incapable of measuring overtime are unacceptable), and

- (iii) neutralisation through the depression of a central button;
- (b) digital timers capable of fulfilling the requirements of subsections (a)(i) and (a)(ii), but which possess any non-standard feature (including a different neutralisation method from that given in subsection (a)(iii));
- (c) digital timers capable only of counting up from 00.00;
- (d) analog chess clocks.

Other timing devices are not suitable for tournament play.

1.4.3 Neutralisation

Throughout these Rules, neutralising a timer means:

- (a) in the case of a digital timer, depressing a button to stop the countdown of both digital displays. This button, often known as the 'hold' button, is usually located centrally on the timer;
- (b) in the case of an analog chess clock, depressing both clock buttons such that they are balanced and neither player's clock is ticking.

1.4.4 Use of Timer Mandatory

The use of a timer is mandatory for all games played under the WESPA Game Rules.

1.5 Written Aids

1.5.1 Score Sheets

Players may use either their own score sheets or those supplied by the tournament organisers. Players are under no obligation to divulge the contents of what they have written on their score sheets except in the case of a recount (see Rule 5.5.3 (Surrender of Score Sheet)) or in accordance with Rule 1.5.3 (Right to Examine Materials).

1.5.2 Tile Tracking Sheets

Players may prepare lists of letters prior to a game for the purpose of tile tracking, for use in addition to their chosen score sheets. This should be done well before the scheduled start of play for the game.

1.5.3 Right to Examine Materials

- (a) Before the game starts, a player has the right to examine all papers and materials brought to the table by an opponent.
- (b) The Tournament Director will resolve any dispute arising over the acceptability of such papers and materials, including any score sheets from games already played in the tournament. The Tournament Director is not to rule that material is unacceptable merely because it includes score sheets from such games.

- (c) At any time during the game, a player who becomes suspicious that an opponent has brought any unacceptable material to the table should ask the Tournament Director to resolve the dispute. The provisions of Part 6 (Conduct) may be relevant.

1.5.4 Writing During the Game

There are no restrictions on what may be written on paper once the game has commenced.

Part 2 – Starting The Game

2.1 Determining Who Starts

- (a) Unless a system to predetermine starts is in use, the **players draw** a tile each to determine who starts, as follows:
 - (i) The player who draws a tile closest to the beginning of the alphabet, with a blank preceding an A, starts the game.
 - (ii) In the event of a tie, each player draws again until the tie is broken.
 - (iii) **No tiles are returned to the bag until the starter is decided. Once a starter is decided, it is the responsibility of the non-starter to return all tiles to the bag.**
- (b) Systems to predetermine starts aim to ensure that all players start approximately half their games in a tournament. These may include:
 - (i) the assignation of the start in each game by a software program employed in the running of the tournament;
 - (ii) 'self-balancing' starts, in which the players compare their start/reply records prior to each game. If one player has hitherto started fewer games than his or her opponent, then that player starts. If the records are equal, the tile-drawing procedure described in subsection (a) is used.

2.2 Starting the Timer

The timer of the player going first may be started once that player has removed a tile from the bag.

2.3 Late Arrivals

2.3.1 Duty to be Present

- (a) It is the duty of all players to be **ready to commence play** at the scheduled starting time for each round. If a player is **not ready**, Rules 2.3.2-2.3.6 may be invoked.

- (b) A player has arrived only when he or she is seated at the playing table ready to commence play immediately.

2.3.2 Both Players Absent

If both players are absent at the start of a round, the Tournament Director **must**:

- (a) exercising due discretion, start the timer to be used for that game;
- (b) when the first player arrives, whether that player is due to play first or not, start the second side of the timer running. The first player will be assigned the time showing on the first side of the timer (that is, the total time assigned per player in normal circumstances minus the time elapsed since the Tournament Director started the timer);
- (c) when the second player arrives, neutralise the timer. The second player will be assigned the time showing on the second side of the timer minus the time deducted already from the time of the first **player (that is, the total time assigned per player in normal circumstances minus the time elapsed since the Tournament Director first started the timer).**

The game then proceeds as usual with the amended time allocations.

2.3.3 One Player Absent

If one player is absent at the start of a round, the Tournament Director **must**:

- (a) exercising due discretion, start that player's side of the timer;
- (b) when that player arrives, neutralise the timer. The player will be assigned the time showing on his or her display.

The game then proceeds as usual with the amended time allocations.

2.3.4 Optional Forfeiture due to Lateness

- (a) A late player whose timer has been started may elect to forfeit the game if his or her assigned game time, as calculated under **Rule 2.3.2** or **2.3.3**, is less than 15 minutes (that is, for standard 25 minute games, when the player has arrived more than 10 minutes late).
- (b) If the player elects to play the game, it will be rated as a normal game.

2.3.5 Compulsory Forfeiture due to Lateness

A player who **does not arrive** before **his or her** assigned game time expires forfeits that game.

2.3.6 Consequences of Forfeiture due to Lateness

- (a) If a game is forfeited under Rules 2.3.4 or 2.3.5, that game should be recorded as a win for the opponent by a margin of 75 points.
- (b) If a game is forfeited under Rules 2.3.4 or 2.3.5, that game should not be considered in producing player ratings for the tournament.

2.4 Shuffling Tiles

Each player has the right to shuffle the tiles within the tile bag before the game starts.

2.5 Special Needs

- (a) Players must notify their opponents and the Tournament Director in advance of any special circumstances, such as physical impediments, that may affect their ability to comply with any procedures set out in these Rules.
- (b) The Tournament Director will determine alternative acceptable procedures that are within the capacity of such players.

Part 3 – The Turn

3.1 Playing a Word

3.1.1 Elements of the Turn

To complete a turn by placing a word on the board ('playing a word'), a player **must** perform the following acts in order:

- (a) place the tiles on the board;
- (b) announce the score for the turn (the score may be computed aloud quietly);
- (c) press the game timer to start the opponent's time running;
- (d) record the score for the turn **and the cumulative score** in the designated space on **his or her** score sheet;
- (e) draw replacement tiles (see Rule 3.9 (Drawing Tiles));
- (f) tile track (if desired).

3.1.2 Accepting the Turn

- (a) Once a player has pressed the game timer according to Rule 3.1.1(c), the opponent must either accept or challenge the turn. The opponent may:
 - (i) call 'hold', in which case Rules 3.10.8 (The 'Hold' Rule) and 3.10.9 (Courtesy Draws) are relevant;
 - (ii) issue a challenge without first calling 'hold', in which case Rule 3.10.1 (Issuing a Challenge) is relevant;
 - (iii) neither call 'hold' nor issue a challenge.
- (b) If the opponent has neither called 'hold' nor issued a challenge, the player may draw replacement tiles. The opponent's right to call 'hold' or issue a challenge survives until the player has removed the first replacement tile from the bag, at which point it is lost.
- (c) (i) If, before either calling 'hold' or issuing a challenge, the opponent

- records in its entirety the score for the move (not the cumulative score) on the designated space on his or her score sheet, the opponent's right to call 'hold' or issue a challenge is lost.
- (ii) If the opponent purports to call 'hold' or issue a challenge, the player may immediately call the Tournament Director to inspect the opponent's score sheet. If the score sheet reveals that the score has been recorded as described in sub-paragraph (i), the Tournament Director is to apply Rule 6.2.5 (Action to be Taken in Case of Unethical Behaviour).
 - (iii) No writing done after a call of 'hold' affects the opponent's right to issue a challenge.
- (d) The opponent may appeal to the Tournament Director on the grounds that the player has drawn replacement tiles too quickly for the opponent reasonably to assess whether to call 'hold' or issue a challenge. After hearing both players, the Tournament Director may determine that the right to challenge has not been lost. Evidence as to whether the sequence prescribed in Rule 3.1.1 was correctly observed will be relevant, as will Rule 6.2.2(k).
 - (e) If the turn was made after the bag became empty, no writing by the opponent at any time waives the opponent's right to call 'hold' or issue a challenge.
 - (f) Verbal indications of acceptance do not affect the right to challenge. However, see Rule 3.10.8(c) concerning the cancellation of a call of 'hold'.

3.2 Exchanging Tiles

3.2.1 Elements of the Exchange

To complete a turn by exchanging tiles, a player **must** perform the following acts in order:

- (a) check that there are at least seven tiles in the bag (if there are not, then exchanging tiles is not permitted);
- (b) announce an intention to exchange;
- (c) state the number of tiles to be exchanged;
- (d) place the stated number of tiles face down on the table;
- (e) press the game timer to start the opponent's time running;
- (f) record the exchange on his or her score sheet;
- (g) draw the required number of replacement tiles and transfer them to the rack;
- (h) return the unwanted tiles from the table to the bag.

3.2.2 Exchange to Score Zero

An exchange of tiles scores zero points.

3.2.3 Exchanging Early in the Game

If exchanging tiles in the early stages of the game, it is common practice to omit Rule 3.2.1(a). Note, however, the provisions of Rule 3.10.16 (Challenging the Legality of an Exchange).

3.3 Passing

3.3.1 Elements of the Pass

A turn completed without either playing a word or exchanging tiles is a pass. To complete a turn by passing, a player **must** perform the following acts in order:

- (a) announce an intention to pass;
- (b) press the game timer to start the opponent's time running;
- (c) record the pass on his or her score sheet.

3.3.2 Passing at the End of a Game

Occasionally a player will be unable to play any valid word, and will also be unable to exchange tiles. In these circumstances the player must either pass or attempt to play an invalid word.

3.4 Significance of Pressing Timer

3.4.1 Pressing Timer Concludes Deliberation

- (a) The act of pressing the timer in Rules 3.1.1(c), 3.2.1(e) or 3.3.1(b) indicates that a player has reached a final choice of move on that turn. After the player has pressed the timer, **the move may not be altered.**
- (b) Nothing in subsection (a) prevents a player from altering his or her choice of move at any point before pressing the timer.
- (c) Nothing in subsection (a) prevents a player from subsequently correcting a scoring error for the turn. **See Rule 3.5(d).**
- (d) A player may not indicate that a final choice of move has been reached by any other means than pressing the timer.
- (e) The act of pressing the timer confers on the opponent an immediate right to challenge the turn in accordance with Rule 3.10.1.

3.4.2 Elements Overlapping with Opponent's Subsequent Turn

- (a) By pressing the timer in accordance with Rules 3.1.1(c), 3.2.1(e) or 3.3.1(b) a player starts the opponent's next turn. Consequently, certain actions, while still elements of the original turn, may potentially overlap with elements of the opponent's next turn.
- (b) It follows from subsection (a) that respecting the sequence given in Rule 3.1.1 is especially important. See also **Rule 6.2.2(m).**
- (c) The Tournament Director will resolve any dispute as to whether the sequence given in Rules 3.1.1, 3.2.1 or 3.3.1 was properly observed and, if not, what consequences should flow.

3.4.3 Omitting to Press Timer

A player who omits to press the timer while making a turn completes that turn by placing a hand in the bag to draw replacement tiles. See also Rule 3.10.7 (Challenging an Improperly Ordered Turn).

3.5 Keeping Score

- (a) Both players must promptly record in the designated spaces on their score sheets the score for each turn and the cumulative score.
- (b) If, when the timer is neutralised at the end of a game, a player has not recorded all scores and cumulative scores (except those pertaining to the final move of the game), then that player may be required to record the scores with his or her timer running.
- (c) It is the responsibility of both players to verify the cumulative scores with reasonable frequency. Note, however, the provisions of Rule 3.6.1(c) and Rule 6.2.2(o).
- (d) The score for any move or the cumulative score may be corrected at any time prior to signing the final result sheet.
- (e) The Tournament Director will resolve any dispute arising over the determination of the correct score. The provisions of Rule 5.4 (Result Sheets) may be relevant.

3.6 Prerogatives of the Player On Move

3.6.1 Actions Reserved for Player On Move

A player may do the following things only when it is his or her turn to play:

- (a) adjust tiles on the board;
- (b) rotate or adjust the board; or
- (c) ask to verify scores with the opponent.

However, WESPA recognises that, in practice, a player will often seek a verification of scores immediately after playing a word and pressing the timer. Should an opponent object to such behaviour, the Tournament Director is to resolve the dispute in accordance with Rule 6.2 (Unethical Behaviour Not Amounting To Cheating).

3.6.2 Actions Where Player On Move Has Priority

- (a) A player whose turn it is to play has priority in completing the following acts:
 - (i) counting the remaining tiles (see Rule 3.7 (Shuffling or Counting the Remaining Tiles)); or
 - (ii) checking the legality of an exchange.
- (b) The player not on move may complete an act described in paragraph (a) only if it will not prevent the player on move from completing the act.

- (c) The player not on move, if completing an act described in paragraph (a), must ensure that the player on move is minimally disturbed by the act. Rule 6.2.2(s) may be relevant.

3.7 Shuffling or Counting the Remaining Tiles

3.7.1 Procedure for Shuffling or Counting Tiles

To shuffle or count the remaining tiles, a player **must**, in this order:

- (a) ensure that shuffling or counting the tiles does not infringe Rule 3.6.2(a);
- (b) announce an intention to shuffle or count the tiles;
- (c) show the opponent that the hand to be used to shuffle or count the tiles is empty (usually by showing an open palm with the fingers stretched apart);
- (d) hold the bag in a position acceptable for tile-drawing while shuffling or counting the tiles (see Rule 3.9.1 (Bag Position));
- (e) show the opponent that the hand used to shuffle or count the tiles is empty upon withdrawing it from the bag.

3.7.2 Right to Object

If tiles without a smooth letter face are in use, a player may object to an opponent shuffling or counting the remaining tiles. If this occurs, the Tournament Director or a member of tournament staff may shuffle or count the tiles while the timer is neutralised, notifying both players of the result of the count.

3.8 Declaring a Blank

- (a) A player who plays a blank tile should clearly announce which letter it represents. It is acceptable, in addition, to point to the relevant letter if it is on the board or to clarify the blank's identity through use of the phonetic alphabet or similar. It is not acceptable to pronounce the word in which the blank appears.
- (b) It is in both players' interests to prevent the blank's identity being subsequently contested. Therefore:
 - (i) the player who plays the blank must record the identity of the blank on the game result sheet when it is played;
 - (ii) the opponent must ensure that this is done;
 - (iii) both players should record the identity of the blank on their score sheets.

These provisions ensure that each player has the capacity to prevent a subsequent dispute arising, and therefore cannot complain of any adverse ruling if a dispute in fact arises.

- (c) If the blank's identity is recorded on the game result sheet, that record is determinative.

- (d) If the blank's identity is not recorded on the game result sheet and a dispute subsequently arises, the Tournament Director will determine the blank's identity as follows:
 - (i) if only one player has recorded its identity, that record is determinative;
 - (ii) if the players have conflicting records, the record of the player who played the blank is determinative;
 - (iii) if neither player has recorded its identity, the player on move may redesignate it. The redesignation may be challenged upon completion of the turn.
- (e) If and only if subsection (b) is fully complied with, then the Tournament Director has the discretion to permit a move based on a misapprehension of the blank's identity to be replayed.
- (f) If the Tournament Director considers that Rule 6.2.2(n) is applicable, then the Tournament Director has the discretion to override subsections (d)(i)-(iii).

3.9 Drawing Tiles

3.9.1 Bag Position

When drawing from the bag, a player must:

- (a) hold the bag such that the rim of the bag is at or above eye level;
- (b) avert his or her eyes from the bag; and
- (c) keep the bag in full view of the opponent.

3.9.2 Drawing Protocols

- (a) While doing so may be helpful to avoid overdrawing, players need not draw tiles individually.
- (b) A player **must** not put a hand into the tile bag if that hand contains tiles. All drawn tiles must be placed on the rack or the table before further tiles are drawn.
- (c) It is **mandatory** to show an empty hand both before and after drawing replacement tiles (see Rule 3.7.1 (Procedure for Shuffling or Counting Tiles)).
- (d) **Replacement tiles must be drawn with reasonable speed.**

3.9.3 Keeping Tiles Above Table

Players must keep all tiles above the level of the playing table at all times.

3.9.4 Improper Drawing

The Tournament Director will resolve any disputes arising over the propriety of tile drawing by either player under Rules 3.9.1-3.9.3. Rule 6.2.2(c) may be relevant.

3.9.5 Overdrawing Tiles (Overdrawer Discloses)

If a player draws too many replacement tiles ('overdraws'), and that player brings the overdraw to the attention of his or her opponent, then the initial procedure is as follows:

- (a) neutralise the timer; and
- (b) ascertain whether any newly drawn tile has touched the overdrawing player's rack.

If a newly drawn tile has touched the rack, then the correct procedure is given in subsection (c); if not, the correct procedure is given in subsection (d).

- (c)
 - (i) The overdrawing player intermixes the newly drawn and old tiles and places them face down on the table.
 - (ii) The opponent randomly turns face up $X+1$ tiles, where X represents the number of excess tiles drawn. Both players should see the tiles.
 - (i) The opponent selects X tiles to return to the bag and one to return to the opponent.
- (d)
 - (i) The overdrawing player places only the newly drawn tiles face down on the table.
 - (ii) The opponent randomly turns face up $X+1$ tiles, where X represents the number of excess tiles drawn. Both players should see the tiles.
 - (iii) The opponent selects X tiles to return to the bag and one to return to the opponent.

3.9.6 Overdrawing Tiles (Opponent Notices)

If a player overdraws, and the opponent notices the overdraw before the player discloses it, then the correct procedure is as follows:

- (a) neutralise the timer;
- (b) the player displays his or her entire rack (including both newly drawn and old tiles) to the opponent;
- (c) the opponent selects X tiles from the rack to return to the bag, where X represents the number of excess tiles drawn.

3.9.7 Duty to Disclose Overdraw

A player who becomes aware that he or she has overdrawn has a duty to disclose the overdraw. Failure to do so is regarded as unethical (see Rule 6.2.2(h)).

3.9.8 Late-Game Underdrawing

- (a) This rule applies near the end of the game only, if a player draws too few replacement tiles, and the opponent subsequently draws all remaining tiles from the bag in his or her next draw.

- (b) If the underdrawing is discovered before the first player has made his or her next move, then the opponent must choose and give to the player the appropriate number of tiles from their rack. There is no additional penalty.
- (c) If the underdrawing is discovered only after the first player has made his or her next move, then there is neither a correction for the mistake nor a penalty.
- (d) Players should be aware that late-game underdrawing is liable to be construed as unethical behaviour, and guard against it.

3.9.9 Drawing Out Of Order

No penalty applies if a player accidentally draws tiles when the opponent should have done so first. However, players are advised that drawing out of order, particularly in the final stage of the game, is liable to be construed as unethical behaviour (see Rule 6.2.2(h)).

3.9.10 Tournament Director's Powers

Occasionally the players may disagree on the correct application of Rules 3.9.5-3.9.8. The Tournament Director will resolve any disputes arising from these Rules or their application. Rule 6.2.2 (Unethical Behaviour Not Amounting to Cheating) may be relevant.

3.10 Challenging

3.10.1 Issuing a Challenge

A player whose opponent has completed a turn may elect to challenge the validity of any word or words played by the opponent on that turn. To issue a challenge, the player must:

- (a) verbally express an intention to challenge (use of the word 'challenge' is preferred; however, any alternative wording may be used as long as it is unambiguous);
- (b) neutralise the timer;
- (c) write the word or words to be challenged legibly on a challenge slip;
- (d) seek agreement from the opponent that the writing on the challenge slip is legible; and
- (e) call for a runner.

Both players then await the adjudication of the challenge. The opponent may elect to cover the board with a score sheet or similar while the challenge is being adjudicated. See Rule 3.10.13 (Board Control During Challenge).

The challenge may be issued as soon as the opponent has indicated a final choice of move. See Rule 3.4.1 (Pressing Timer Concludes Deliberation).

The timer may not be started after a challenge until either the score for the

move has been re-announced or the tiles retracted, depending upon the result of the challenge.

3.10.2 Adjudicating a Challenge

On receiving a challenge slip for adjudication, the adjudicator **must**:

- (a) carefully check the acceptability of the challenged word or words using either computer software or a printed word list;
- (b) place a tick on the challenge slip if all challenged words are acceptable, or a cross if at least one is not; and
- (c) return the challenge slip to the runner.

When more than one word is challenged, neither the adjudicator nor the runner may inform the players about the acceptability of individual words.

In some tournaments, docket printers are used to print the result of a challenge. The printout may be returned to the players in lieu of the original challenge slip at such tournaments.

3.10.3 Self-Running

- (a) If there are no runners at the tournament, the player issuing the challenge may take the challenge slip to the adjudicator. When this occurs, both players **must** turn any tiles on their racks face down.
- (b) The timer may not be started after a self-run challenge until both players are seated **and either the score for the move re-announced or the tiles retracted, depending upon the result of the challenge.**

3.10.4 Self-Adjudicating

If there are no adjudicators at the tournament, computer software must be used for adjudication. The tournament director **must** ensure that the software is loaded with the correct lexicon and that all players know how to use the computers to adjudicate. The following procedure **is** adopted in place of Rule 3.10.1(c)-(e):

- (a) The player issuing the challenge clearly informs the opponent which word or words are being challenged, **and may also choose to record the word or words;**
- (b) Both players turn any tiles on their racks face down and proceed to the adjudication computer;
- (c) The player issuing the challenge types the word or words to be challenged into the adjudication program;
- (d) The opponent verifies that the word or words are correctly typed and executes the adjudication command within the program.

The timer **must** not be restarted after a self-adjudicated challenge until both players are seated **and either the score for the move re-announced or the tiles**

retracted, depending upon the result of the challenge.

Failure to observe the protocols of this Rule may be regarded as unethical: see Rule 6.2.2(u).

3.10.5 No Retraction or Concession of a Challenge

- (a) If a player has verbally indicated an intention to challenge and neutralised the timer, then that player is compelled to challenge.
- (b) The player retains freedom to change his or her mind about which word or words to challenge at any time before the challenge slip is given to the runner. In the case of self-run or self-adjudicated challenges, this freedom is lost when the challenger leaves the playing table.
- (c) A player whose turn is challenged may not concede the challenge prior to adjudication.

3.10.6 Waiver of Right to Challenge

By accepting a turn, a player waives the right to challenge it. Rule 3.1.2 defines acceptance of a turn.

3.10.7 Challenging an Improperly Ordered Turn

If in the course of making a turn a player performs the acts given in Rule 3.1.1 in the incorrect sequence, but has pressed the timer or placed a hand in the bag to draw replacement tiles, then that player is still liable to be challenged. See Rule 3.4.3 (Omitting to Press Timer).

If a player attempts to draw tiles before pressing the timer, then the opponent may:

- (a) alert the player to the incorrect sequence of acts;
- (b) require the player to press the timer immediately; and
- (c) issue a challenge as normal.

This sequence may also be followed if no tiles remain in the bag, and a player records a score before pressing the timer.

3.10.8 The 'Hold' Rule

- (a) If a player is actively considering a challenge, he or she may alert the opponent to this by calling 'hold'. This warns the opponent not to draw fresh tiles in case a challenge is issued.
- (b) The player may take any amount of time to accept or challenge the play after calling 'hold'.
- (c) Unambiguous words such as 'okay' or 'accept' should be used to indicate cancellation of a hold.

3.10.9 Courtesy Draws

- (a) A player whose opponent has called 'hold' may, after one minute from pressing the timer in accordance with Rule 3.1.1(c), draw replacement tiles. These tiles must be kept separately from the player's rack, although the player may look at them. Under no circumstances may the tiles be intermixed with the player's old tiles (see Rule 6.2.2(p)).
- (b) If a courtesy draw has occurred and a challenge is subsequently upheld, the replacement tiles should be returned to the bag. This situation is not treated as an overdraw, and the opponent does not see the replacement tiles.

3.10.10 Rechallenging

- (a) A player who is unsatisfied with the result of a challenge may request that it be re-adjudicated.
- (b) If such a request is made, the original adjudicator should not perform the re-adjudication.
- (c) The result of a re-adjudication is final unless it differs from the original adjudication, in which case the Tournament Director may be called to provide a final adjudication.

3.10.11 Erroneous Challenges

If it is discovered that a word written on a challenge slip does not correspond to a word played on the board in the most recent turn, then the challenge may be reissued, notwithstanding anything in Rule 3.10.10.

3.10.12 Misadjudication

If a challenge is discovered to have been misadjudicated, the error may be corrected if and only if the timer has not yet been restarted for the next play. Otherwise, play continues as normal and no account is taken of the error.

3.10.13 Board Control During Challenge

When the timer is neutralised pending an adjudication, the player whose turn has been challenged retains control of the board.

3.10.14 Challenge Penalties

The penalty incurred by an incorrect challenge may vary from tournament to tournament. The tournament organiser should notify players prior to the tournament which penalty condition is in force. Once this has been announced it may not be changed.

A player whose opponent successfully challenges always loses that turn as per the Standard Rules. No penalty for challenging applies unless all the words challenged are acceptable.

The following is a list of penalty conditions that WESPA considers standard:

- (a) no penalty for an incorrect challenge ('single challenge');
- (b) five-point penalty per incorrectly challenged word;
- (c) five-point penalty per incorrectly challenged turn (regardless of the number of words challenged in the turn);
- (d) as in subsection (b) or (c), but using ten points instead of five;
- (e) loss of turn for an incorrect challenge ('double challenge').

Other penalty conditions **include** incrementally increasing penalties. These are **not considered** standard. Examples are:

- (f) no penalty for first incorrect challenge, loss of turn for subsequent incorrect challenges ('dingle challenge');
- (g) five-point penalty for first incorrect challenge, ten-point penalty for subsequent incorrect challenges;
- (h) 5-5-10-20-30 point (or similar) increasing penalties for incorrect challenges;
- (i) **time penalties of 30-60 seconds for all incorrect challenges.**

As at **June** 2009, WESPA considers option (b) the preferred international norm. Tournaments that do not use standard penalty conditions risk being regarded by WESPA as nonratable.

3.10.15 Challenging Word Placement

- (a) A player may challenge a turn on the grounds that a word has been placed illegally. A non-exhaustive list of illegal word placements includes:
 - (i) failure to cover the centre square on the opening play;
 - (ii) inadvertently leaving a tile or tiles on the board but disconnected from the intended play;
 - (iii) playing a diagonal word;
 - (iv) playing a word that extends beyond the 15x15 grid.
- (b) A player wishing to challenge the legality of a word placement **must** neutralise the **timer** and call the Tournament Director to adjudicate the challenge.
- (c) There is no penalty for an incorrect challenge.
- (d) A player is free to refrain from challenging an illegal word placement. In the case of subsection (a)(i), if a player so refrains, the centre square retains its double-word-score value for subsequent turns.

3.10.16 Challenging the Legality of an Exchange

- (a) A player may challenge the legality of an exchange if the opponent has announced the exchange and pressed the timer but the player believes that fewer than seven tiles remain in the bag.
- (b) A player wishing to challenge the legality of an exchange **must** neutralise the clock and call the Tournament Director to adjudicate the challenge.
- (c) There is no penalty for an incorrect challenge.

- (d) A player is free to refrain from challenging an illegal exchange.

Part 4 – Interrupting the Game

4.1 Neutralising the Timer

- (a) Except in accordance with subsection (b), the timer must not be neutralised during a game.
- (b) The timer may be neutralised:
 - (i) in the course of issuing a challenge (see Rule 3.10.1 ('Issuing a Challenge'));
 - (ii) in order to resolve a scoring discrepancy;
 - (iii) while the overdraw rule is being enforced (see Rules 3.9.5 and 3.9.6);
 - (iv) when a late player whose timer has been started arrives at the playing table (see Rules 2.3.2 and 2.3.3);
 - (v) if neutralisation is otherwise required under any of these Rules;
 - (vi) if the Tournament Director's presence is required to resolve any problem; or
 - (vii) if neutralisation is required by an unforeseen event unconnected with the ordinary conduct of the game (for example, a spillage of water on the board, or a power failure).

4.2 Leaving the Playing Area

- (a) A player wishing to leave the playing area during a game must, where possible, obtain the Tournament Director's permission to do so.
- (b) Permission having been obtained, the procedure is as follows:
 - (i) The player wishing to leave must complete a turn, starting the opponent's timer and recording the score for the turn, but not drawing replacement tiles.
 - (ii) The player may then leave the playing area.
 - (iii) While the player is absent, the opponent may make a play, starting the player's timer and recording the score for the move, but not drawing replacement tiles.
- (c) All actions taken in accordance with subsection (b) must be performed under the supervision of the Tournament Director or another member of the tournament staff.
- (d) A player may not leave the playing area without the Tournament Director's permission except in case of emergency. The opponent must alert the Tournament Director immediately if this occurs.

- (e) Supervision of players while they are outside the playing area is at the discretion of the Tournament Director. An opponent may request but may not compel supervision.

4.3 Tile Discovered Out of the Bag

If any tiles are discovered outside the bag at any time during a game and before the result sheet has been signed, then:

- (a) both players see the tiles;
- (b) the tiles are returned to the bag;
- (c) any tiles that may have been removed from players' racks in the belief that the game was over are replaced; and
- (d) one of the following steps is taken:
 - (i) if both players have seven tiles on their racks, play resumes as usual;
 - (ii) if only one player has seven tiles, that player's opponent should draw from the bag; or
 - (iii) if neither player has seven tiles, the players ascertain who should have drawn replacement tiles earliest and that player draws from the bag. If only one player has tiles after this is done, the game is over and the result is recalculated as necessary.

Under no circumstances may any moves be replayed.

4.4 Tile Discovered In the Bag

If any tiles are discovered in the bag, which the players had thought to be empty, before the score sheets are signed, then:

- (a) both players see the tiles;
- (b) any tiles that may have been removed from players' racks in the belief that the game was over are replaced; and
- (c) the players ascertain who should have drawn replacement tiles earliest and that player adds the tiles to his or her rack.

If both players still have tiles after this process, play resumes. If only one player has tiles, the game is over and the result recalculated as necessary. **Under no circumstances may any moves be replayed.**

Part 5 – Ending The Game

5.1 'Playing Out'

5.1.1 Procedure for 'Playing Out'

'Playing out' occurs when:

- (a) a player completes a turn, and

- (b) after completing that turn, that player has no tiles remaining, and
- (c) there are no remaining tiles to be drawn from the bag.

5.1.2 Actions to be Taken Upon 'Playing Out'

A player who is attempting to play out **must** neutralise the timer, rather than starting the timer of the opponent. The opponent **must** then either:

- (a) accept the turn in the usual way (that is, by recording the score); or
- (b) challenge the turn.

5.1.3 Right to Restart Timer

- (a) If a player has attempted to play out, and his or her opponent performs neither of the actions given in Rule 5.1.2 within approximately five seconds, then the player is entitled to restart the opponent's timer while awaiting the opponent's action.
- (b) If an opponent's clock is started under subsection (a), the opponent **must** neutralise the timer after deciding either to accept the play or to challenge.

5.1.4 Tiles Remaining

When a player has played out, then either:

- (a) his or her score is increased by the value of the opponent's unplayed tiles, and the opponent's score is commensurately decreased; or
- (b) his or her score is increased by twice the value of the opponent's unplayed tiles, and the opponent's score is unchanged.

The tournament organiser **must** ensure that all players **know** which subsection is in force.

5.2 Six Consecutive Zero Scores

5.2.1 Game Ended by Six Consecutive Zero Scores

The game ends after six consecutive turns scoring zero. The scores of zero may result from either

- (a) passes;
- (b) exchanges;
- (c) successful challenges; or
- (d) any combination of (a), (b) and (c).

5.2.2 Action to be Taken After Six Consecutive Zero Scores

If the game is ended under Rule 5.2.1, each player's score is reduced by the total value of the tiles on his or her rack.

5.3 Time Penalties

5.3.1 Ascertaining When Time Penalties Apply

A player is subject to time penalties once the time limit assigned to that player for the game is exceeded. This **occurs** when:

- (a) the player's timer's display shows -00:01 (in the case of a digital count-down timer);
- (b) the player's timer's display shows xx:01 (in the case of a digital count-up timer, where xx represents the assigned game time in minutes); or
- (c) the flag on the player's side has dropped (in the case of an analog chess clock).

5.3.2 Application of Time Penalties

- (a) **The score of a** player subject to time penalties under Rule 5.3.1 **is** reduced by 10 points per minute or part thereof by which the time limit was exceeded.
- (b) The Tournament Director will resolve any dispute arising over the application of time penalties.

5.3.3 Overtime Leading to Forfeiture

- (a) A player who overruns his or her allotted time by 10 minutes shall forfeit that game.
- (b) The game margin in a game forfeited under subsection (a) shall be:
 - (i) the margin at the time of forfeiture (taking the imposition of time penalties into account); or
 - (ii) 100 points;whichever is the greater.
- (c) Games forfeited under Rules 2.3.4 and 2.3.5 are not subject to this Rule.

5.3.4 No Additional Time Penalties When Timer Not Neutralised

- (a) If the timer is improperly left running at the end of the game, any additional overtime that accrues beyond the point at which the timer should have been neutralised will be disregarded.
- (b) The Tournament Director will resolve any dispute arising over the application of subsection (a).

5.3.5 Standard Game Time

- (a) WESPA regards a time limit of 25 minutes per player per game as standard.
- (b) Tournament organisers are not bound by subsection (a); however, the use of any substantially different time limit may lead WESPA to view a tournament as nonratable.

5.4 Result Sheets

5.4.1 Result Sheets Final Once Signed

- (a) If both players have

- (i) agreed upon the final game scores, and
 - (ii) signed the result sheet,
- then no change may be made to the result sheet except in accordance with subsections (b) and (c).
- (b) The result sheet may be changed if both players, prior to handing it in, agree that a mistake has occurred in preparing it.
 - (c) After the result sheet is handed in, it may be changed only with the express permission of the Tournament Director upon petition from both players.

5.4.2 Responsibility of Winner

It is the responsibility of the winner, before leaving the playing area, to ensure that the result sheet is handed in.

5.5 Recounts

5.5.1 Right to Recount

Either player may request a recount at the conclusion of a game, but only if the game margin is 10 points or less.

5.5.2 Recount Procedure

A game must either be recounted in its entirety, or not at all. Partial recounts are not acceptable. The timer remains neutralised during a recount.

5.5.3 Surrender of Score Sheet

A player conducting a recount may request the use of the opponent's score sheet. The opponent may object, but must, if asked, surrender the score sheet to the Tournament Director, who may use it to assist the recounting player.

5.5.4 Tournament Director's Discretion

- (a) Recounts are generally undesirable, as they can interfere with the tournament schedule.
- (b) Given subsection (a), it is strongly recommended that players confirm each other's move scores and the cumulative score before the game has ended (see Rule 3.5(c)).
- (c) Given subsection (a), the Tournament Director may halt any recount if he or she believes it is frivolous or has taken an excessive time.
- (d) If the Tournament Director believes that a player is frivolously recounting or deliberately slowing the progress of a recount, then he or she may direct that no changes in that player's favour be made as a result of the recount.
- (e) Nothing in subsection (c) empowers the Tournament Director to halt a recount conducted in good faith and within a reasonable amount of time.

Part 6 – Conduct

6.1 Cheating

6.1.1 Definition

WESPA considers any deliberate bad-faith violation of the Standard Rules or these Game Rules to be an act of cheating. This includes any instance of collusion between players for any reason.

6.1.2 Duty Not to Cheat

- (a) All players are honour bound not to cheat.
- (b) It is the responsibility of all players not only to guard at all times against any personal action that might incur suspicion or misinterpretation, but also immediately to draw to the attention of their opponents any such action on their part.
- (c) A player who believes that an act of cheating has occurred in his or her game should call the Tournament Director. See Rule 6.4 (Tournament Director's Powers and Responsibilities).
- (d) A third party who believes that he or she has witnessed an act of cheating in a game should not intervene directly, but should report that belief to the Tournament Director. See Rule 6.4 (Tournament Director's Powers and Responsibilities).

6.1.3 Action to be Taken in Case of Cheating

If a player is discovered to have committed an act of cheating, then:

- (a) that player will be disqualified from further participation in the tournament;
- (b) all games already played by that player in the tournament, including the game in progress, as well as all games yet to be played by that player, will be considered void;
- (c) that player's conduct will be reported to his or her National Association (if any); and
- (d) WESPA may act to restrict that player's participation in future tournaments.

6.2 Unethical Behaviour Not Amounting to Cheating

6.2.1 Definition

WESPA considers any deliberate act that cannot be classified as cheating under Rule 6.1, but which nevertheless goes against the spirit of equitable, courteous, fair and honest play, to be unethical. It is assumed and expected that tournament players will uphold high ethical standards and abhor unethical behaviour.

6.2.2 Examples of Unethical Behaviour Not Amounting to Cheating

Any of the following acts is likely to constitute unethical behaviour under Rule

6.2.1:

- (a) denying the opponent an unimpaired view of the board at any time;
- (b) **distracting** the opponent by manipulating the board or tiles on the board, or by waving hands over the board;
- (c) drawing tiles improperly (this may also amount to cheating if done repeatedly);
- (d) **making** comments calculated, or capable of being thought to be calculated, to mislead the opponent or otherwise affect his or her play (for example, pronouncing a word containing a blank, or stating doubt as to the acceptability of a word);
- (e) any unnecessary talking during the game (including loud or lengthy computation of the score for a move);
- (f) presenting an unduly aggressive demeanour, or abusing the opponent;
- (g) deliberately making, or failing to correct, scoring errors. This includes a **refusal** to amend a signed score sheet where such an amendment would correct a scoring error;
- (h) deliberately overdrawing or underdrawing tiles, deliberately failing to disclose an overdraw, or deliberately drawing tiles out of order, especially towards the end of the game;
- (i) issuing frivolous challenges **that** gain thinking time while the clock is neutralised, or calling 'hold' solely in order to prevent **the** opponent from drawing fresh tiles;
- (j) deliberately drawing tiles quickly in order to **prevent** the opponent from challenging (this may also amount to cheating if done repeatedly);
- (k) **misinforming** the opponent as to the number of tiles remaining in the bag;
- (l) using or having on one's person during the game a mobile phone, pager, palmtop computer or similar device, or any other object or material likely to be deemed unacceptable;
- (m) tile tracking before drawing fresh tiles, thereby potentially hindering the opponent from drawing fresh tiles **in turn** (this may also amount to cheating if done repeatedly);
- (n) deliberately misrecording or failing to record the identity of a blank **and misrepresenting** that identity later on in the game;
- (o) checking scores in order to gain thinking time by neutralising the timer, checking scores simply to disturb the opponent's thought, or refusing to check scores when properly requested to do so;
- (p) intermixing old tiles with tiles drawn in a courtesy draw;
- (q) motioning to press the timer to complete a turn, but refraining from doing so, **and thereby gauging** the opponent's reaction to the turn;
- (r) **purporting to call 'hold' or issue a challenge after having recorded the score for a move as described in Rule 3.1.2(c)(i);**

- (s) counting tiles or manipulating the tile bag in a distracting manner when it is the opponent's turn;
- (t) deliberately delaying a challenge in order to view tiles drawn in a courtesy draw;
- (u) violating the prescribed protocols for self-adjudicated challenges.

6.2.3 Behaviour Not Considered Unethical

The following acts are not generally considered unethical:

- (a) using the opponent's time to think about a move, if the opponent has forgotten to press the timer at the end of a turn;
- (b) playing quickly and thereby rendering the opponent short of time;
- (c) failing to check the opponent's calculation of a score (it is, however, strongly recommended that players do check this);
- (d) the use of non-verbal body language to convey a particular impression (for instance, confidently playing a word in order to dissuade the opponent from challenging); or
- (e) deliberately refraining from issuing a challenge because it is advantageous to so refrain.

However, it is nevertheless conceivable that some such acts, if done repeatedly or in an exaggerated fashion, might amount to unethical conduct in the opinion of the Tournament Director.

Players are entitled to keep the contents of their score sheets private unless these Rules require otherwise. It is therefore not generally considered unethical to look at an opponent's visible score sheet in order to check scores or ascertain the acceptance of a move. However, it is unethical to seek unfair advantage by looking at an opponent's score sheet.

6.2.4 Determination of State of Mind

WESPA recognises that in most cases, regarding an act as unethical requires an anterior judgment about the offending player's state of mind. Many different factors may relevantly contribute to a belief that a player was or was not deliberately behaving unethically. The Tournament Director is the first and final arbiter of all such questions.

6.2.5 Action to be Taken in Case of Unethical Behaviour

- (a) A player who believes that an opponent is acting unethically should call the Tournament Director.
- (b) The Tournament Director may, if of the opinion that a player has acted unethically, warn that player or impose any penalty that he or she deems appropriate.
- (c) A non-exhaustive list of possible penalties for unethical behaviour is, in order of increasing severity:
 - (i) warning;

- (ii) loss of turn, loss of time or point penalty in the game in progress;
 - (iii) reduction of margin in the tournament standings;
 - (iv) forfeiture of a game; or
 - (v) eviction from the tournament.
- (d) The Tournament Director should notify a player's National Association and WESPA if he or she considers that a player's unethical behaviour is sufficiently serious to warrant such a step.

6.3 Etiquette

6.3.1 Definition

WESPA expects tournament players to observe high standards of etiquette during games. In practice, this amounts to little more than playing the game with due courtesy and consideration, treating their opponents and those around them with respect.

6.3.2 Examples of Poor Etiquette

The following acts are generally considered to breach the desired standards of etiquette:

- (a) deliberately arriving late to a game;
- (b) talking frivolously during a game;
- (c) rotating the board for the opponent at the completion of a turn;
- (d) playing tiles upside down;
- (e) placing the tile bag out of reach of the opponent;
- (f) observing a game at a distance the players find uncomfortable, or commenting on a game within sight or hearing of the players;
- (g) conducting lengthy or loud post-game analyses with the opponent; or
- (h) taking advantage of an accidental exposure of tiles by the opponent.

6.3.3 Action to be Taken in Case of Poor Etiquette

In general, a breach of etiquette will not attract any penalty. However, in extreme circumstances a player who is aggrieved by poor etiquette may call the Tournament Director. If the specific case warrants it, the Tournament Director may impose a penalty on the player's opponent (see Rule 6.2.5(c) for examples of such penalties).

6.4 Tournament Director's Powers and Responsibilities

- (a) The Tournament Director is the first and final arbiter of any dispute arising with respect to the conduct of the players, whether it be a matter of cheating, unethical behaviour or poor etiquette.
- (b) In reaching a decision over any such dispute, the Tournament Director is entitled to take the smooth running of the tournament into consideration.

- (c) When resolving any such dispute, the Tournament Director is obliged to give each player a fair hearing. This includes, where relevant, hearing the testimony of witnesses.
- (d) The examples of proper and improper conduct given throughout this Part are non-exhaustive. Inevitably, situations will arise that are not immediately contemplated by these Rules. The Tournament Director is expected to exercise intelligence and impartiality in resolving these situations, and to resolve them consistently with these Rules.

6.5 Right of Appeal

A player whose conduct is subject to any adverse ruling or finding has a right of appeal. WESPA will convene a committee of disinterested players to hear the appeal. The committee will determine the appeal by reference to written submissions from the relevant persons.

If the appeal is upheld in whole or in part, the committee will recommend a course of action to WESPA. This may include the amendment of tournament results.

There is no further right of appeal.

Appendix – Standard Rules