

C₃O₁F₄F₄S₁S₁C₃R₁A₁B₃B₃L₁E₁C₃L₁U₁B₃

Newsletter # RULES

Coffs Scrabble Club Rules of Play

“Show me the rule.” Nick Kyrgios.

Reference Dictionary:-

- **Collins** Scrabble Dictionary – Fifth Edition 2019 (also known as **CSW19**)

Note:- the **Meriam-Webster** Dictionary is used in North America & Canada.

Reason: *The standard dictionary for Tournament & Club use in Australia. Dictionary brands have different words &, in some cases spellings. This alleviates the problem of arguments.*

Commencement:-

- Count the tiles before commencement of the game. This can be done quite quickly by placing a 5x5 set of tiles in each corner of the board to give you the 100 tile count. If any of the 100 tiles are missing place the tiles onto an alphabet count card, to ascertain the missing tile/s. **Reason:** *Tiles can go missing in transport or accidentally in play.*
- Drawing tiles from the bag should be done above the level of the table, such that no tiles can be seen in the bag. **Reason:** *Tiles are easily seen in the bag at certain levels.*
- In Club play, players decide who will draw first. Each player draws a tile; the player closest to ‘A’ goes first. However, a blank is considered to beat the ‘A’. These tiles are returned to the bag for the first draw. **Reason:** *If left in play on the rack the other player will know at least one letter of your rack, esp. if a power tile or blank is a concern.*
- When using a non-rotating board the orientation of the board is agreed upon.
- Tile tracking is allowed by keeping tally on the score sheet or a separate sheet.
- Writing down words/letter combinations on a separate sheet for reference at the end of the game is allowed.
- Tiles on the board may be shuffled around to accommodate a word play, but only before the score is tallied-up. *Though not a rule*, consideration should be given to not returning tiles to the rack once placed upon the board. **Reason:** *They are considered table tiles & if not adhered to, you will be giving your opponent an unfair advantage, as he/she will know some/all of your rack words.*
- A dictionary, word sheet or technology device is generally not acceptable during play. **Reason:** *This is not only unfair to the opponent but does the player an injustice, as it limits the player making connections within the brain, in addition, the player becomes reliant on the instrument to make words which is counterproductive to the idea behind the game. However, for new inductees to the game it is considered a learning tool while the player is in the initial induction phase.*

During play:-

- When exchanging tiles – first place the tiles to be discarded face down on the table then draw the required number of tiles from the bag. Then return the discarded tiles to the bag. **Reason:** *This negates the situation of redrawing the same tiles.*
- If a word passes through two premium word squares that word is doubled & doubled again or tripled & tripled again as the case may be.
- Once a bonus square is covered by a letter, it cannot be re-used for subsequent turns.
- If a player picks-up too many tiles, the excess are removed from the rack by the opponent.
- A word can be extended on both ends on a turn, or played through a number of words.
- A player may miss a turn without exchanging tiles, called a pass, & a score of zero is recorded. **Reason:** *A player may have a bingo or a good letter set & wishes to await the turn of the opponent for an opportunity to put the word on the board, whereas previously there was nowhere for placement; or simply a player may have no place to go. In addition, a player is not obliged to play a word just because he/she can. Strategically, there maybe an instance, where a player could lose a game by having a word placement turn.*
- Bingo/bonus points (using all seven tiles) add an extra 50 points to a player’s total after the normal score is tallied up.

Endgame:-

- If there are less than seven tiles in the bag a player may not exchange tiles on future turns.
- Play continues until both players have used up all the tiles in the bag, and one player has used-up all the tiles on his/her rack.
- The player with tiles left on the rack, tally-up the points of the remaining tiles on his/her rack and adds the points to the opponent's score and then deducts this total from their own score. After this occurs, the player with the highest score is declared the winner.
- If a stalemate occurs (where either player cannot go) the game ends after six consecutive turns scoring zero, resulting from any combination of passes, exchanges & successful challenges. If this occurs, each player's final score is reduced by the total value of tiles on his/her rack. **Reason:** *This allows for plays that were not intended to end the game, such as exchanges, challenges & passes of zero scores in consecutive plays & after these plays players are still able to make a point-scoring turn.*
- If the final scores are tied, the player whose score was the highest before adjusting for unplayed tiles is the winner.

The Challenge:-

- The validity of a word maybe challenged, this needs to be done before writing down the score.
- When a word is challenged it applies to all words made in the given turn.
- If a phoney word is not challenged it remains on the board. However, if during play a further letter/s are added to the phoney word, it maybe challenged then as a phoney word.
- Typically, in Australia, in Clubs & Tournaments, the *Single Challenge Rule* is used.
- *The Double Challenge* is typically played in North America. **Reason:** *Is considered to have merits in strategic play and bluffing tactics, such as used in poker. It also alleviates constant challenges by some players, which can slowdown tournament play.*

Challenge Types

Single Challenge:-

In the single challenge rule, if a player places a word and the opponent wishes to challenge its legitimacy, the challenger may do so with no penalty. If the word is valid it remains on the board. If invalid, it is removed from the board and returned to the challenged rack. The turn is noted as a pass with zero points to the challenged player. The challenger receives no penalty (point deduction or loss of a turn) no matter if the challenged play is valid or invalid.

Dingle Challenge:-

The first incorrect challenge is not penalised, but subsequent errors result in the challenger losing a turn. It is believed this type is no longer used.

Modified Single Challenge also known as a Penalty Challenge:-

Instead of a player losing a turn, 5-10 point penalty is agreed upon. If a player challenges the opponent's play and the word is invalid, the letters are taken back as usual and the opponent loses his/her turn. However, if the word is valid, the word remains on the board and the challenger loses 5-10 points, whatever penalty is agreed. This can be given to the opponent or subtracted from the challenger's score, whatever is agreed.

Double Challenge:-

Suppose a player makes a play and the opponent challenges. If the challenged word/s is/are acceptable, the challenger loses the turn. If any of the challenged words are unacceptable, the player removes the played tiles and forfeits his/her turn.