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OFFICIAL TOURNAMENT RULES

Rules are available online at www.scrabble-assoc.com/rules

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I. BEGINNING THE GAME

A. EQUIPMENT

1. References

a. *Official Tournament & Club Word List (OWL)* contains the only 2- to 9-letter words acceptable for club and tournament play, published by Merriam-Webster, Inc.

b. For words of more than nine letters, the *OWL* is consulted first. If a longer word (more than nine letters) is not listed in the *OWL*, to be judged acceptable it must appear in the *Long List (LL)*. The *Long List* was compiled from *Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 10th Edition*.

c. Software Self-Lookups (SSL): The NSA has approved using appropriate software for adjudicating challenges. See Appendix C pages 16-18 for a complete set of rules and instructions. John Babina's program "Word Judge" has been approved for use at the National SCRABBLE® Championship. Local Directors are advised to contact the NSA in order to acquire a copy of the program. Using SSLs there is a good chance for achieving zero adjudication mistakes.

2. Tiles

Smoother tiles — those with which there is less possibility of determining the letter on a tile by touch alone — are preferred.

Three-piece Protiles, those with a plug and paper letter inserted, shall be considered less preferred than one-piece Protiles.

3. Clocks

For all NSA sanctioned tournament games using clocks, you are allowed exactly 25 minutes to complete all plays, after which an overtime penalty applies (see Section III.C.2). There is no limit on the time taken per turn.

Clocks are preferred in this order:

a. Digital or analog clocks that count down and show exact minutes and seconds, both of time remaining and of overtime.

b. Digital clocks that count down and do not show exact minutes and seconds of overtime.

d. Digital clocks that begin at zero and count up, or analog clocks that do not show exact minutes and seconds.

c. Sand timers (see Appendix B).

Do not use a clock for which minutes of overtime cannot be readily determined.

A quieter clock is preferred to one whose loudness is objectionable, as determined by the Director.

4. Racks / Boards

The top of each tile on your rack must be visible at all times, so that your opponent can see how many tiles you have. You may use a non-standard rack if it meets this requirement.

If the board blocks your opponent's view of your tiles when your rack is in the usual position, lower or replace the board as needed.

5. Papers

The only visible papers allowed in your playing area are blank sheets of paper, your contestant scorecard, your current score sheet, challenge slips, blank-designation slips and an alphabet or letter-distribution list(s). You may construct and use your own letter lists. All other papers stored in the playing area (e.g., old score sheets) must be kept out of sight and cannot be referred to at any time during the game.

6. Disputed Equipment

If you and your opponent disagree on which shared equipment to use (tiles, board, clock, bag, table), use that which is preferred or conforms more closely with specifications. The player going second may choose between equally conforming equipment.

The Director in his discretion may accommodate a player disadvantaged by equipment because of problems such as letter visibility, bag size, reflectivity of board or tiles.

a. Boards are less preferred if they have one or more of the following attributes: 1) more glary 2) do not turn easily 3) have distracting background designs.

b. Tiles which are faded or hard to read are less preferred.

c. Tile bags which are either too big, which may easily hide a tile near the end of the game, or are too small, which are prone to have players either drop tiles or inadvertently see letters remaining in the bag, are less preferred. There is no exact measurement defining wrong-sized bags. The Director is advised to use his/her own judgment if called upon to make such a decision.

d. Headphones are forbidden from being worn during a tournament game. Other devices, electronic or otherwise, are also forbidden from use during the game. Exceptions may only be made for legitimate medical reasons, and must be discussed with the Director in advance.

B. CONFIRMING THE NUMBER OF TILES

Before each game, confirm that there are 100 tiles, with the letter distribution as shown on the side of the board. Replace a defective set or notify the Director. If you later discover that there are missing tiles, and they cannot be found, the game proceeds with the tile pool as is.

C. WHO PLAYS FIRST?

If the order of play is not pre-determined by the tournament structure, who plays first is determined by the first method that applies:

- 1.** The player with fewer firsts.
- 2.** The player with more seconds.

3. The player who draws a single tile earlier in the alphabet (blank counted before "A", repeating this as needed). Tiles are returned to the bag before starting play.

D. STARTING PLAY

Both players may shuffle the tiles before the game begins.

The first player draws his initial tiles only when the opponent is alerted to this action. If the second player has not yet shuffled and asks to do so before the first player has drawn seven tiles, the first player must comply before completing his draw.

If you are going second, start your opponent's clock as soon as she looks at a drawn letter.

E. MISSING THE CENTER SQUARE

If the first word does not cover the center square, the opponent may challenge the play off the board, regardless of its acceptability. If not challenged, it is scored without the Double Word Score bonus earned on an opening play. The center square remains as a DWS usable on a later play.

F. ARRIVING LATE

If your opponent is ready to play and you have not arrived, the Director may start your clock, no earlier than three minutes after the start of the round. Your opponent does nothing. When you arrive, the clock is stopped for pre-game preliminaries and determining who plays first; then the game begins with your reduced time as is. (See Guideline 19.)

II. PLAYING THE GAME

A. HOW TO DRAW TILES

Hold the bag at eye level or higher and avert your eyes. Show your open palm to your opponent just before drawing. Draw the number of tiles needed and place them either directly on your rack or face down on the table first.

A tile is defined as drawn when your drawing hand has completely left the bag. You may not return drawn tiles to the bag, other than through the listed procedures for exchange or overdraw. If you return tiles to the bag improperly, the following penalty applies, where X = the number of tiles returned:

The clock is neutralized, your opponent takes X tiles from the bag and two tiles from your rack and exposes them all face up to common view, and within one minute returns X tiles of her choice to the bag and the remaining two tiles to you. Restart the clock.

B. OVERDRAWING

If you draw too many tiles, or become aware at any time that you have more than seven tiles on your rack, inform your opponent and

neutralize the clock. The following penalty applies, where X = the number of extra tiles:

If you have combined none of the newly-drawn tiles with your old tiles, your opponent selects (X+2) tiles randomly from the new tiles (face down). If you have combined at least one new tile with your old tiles, your opponent selects the (X+2) tiles from the mixed group of all new and old tiles. In either case, the selected tiles are exposed face up to common view, and within one minute your opponent returns X tiles of her choice to the bag and the remaining two tiles to you. Restart the clock.

EXCEPTION: If you should have drawn a single tile but drew more, and you have combined none of the newly-drawn tiles with your old tiles, your opponent exposes only the new tiles, and within one minute returns one tile to you and the remaining tiles to the bag.

If the non-offender has not yet drawn, or is in the process of drawing tiles when the opponent's overdrawing is discovered, the non-offender stops further drawing and completes the Overdraw procedure before finishing his drawing. The offender mixes the tiles before the non-offender completes his drawing.

When performing the "Overdraw" procedure, we advise the non-offender to select the tiles only after they have been mixed and placed face down on the table. In addition, while the non-offender chooses the tiles, the offender should be the one who actually exposes them. This will tend to avoid exposing too many tiles in this penalty situation.

Tiles that have popped out of the bag inadvertently or are discovered under or near the board or on the floor are not considered to be overdrawn.

C. DRAWING OUT OF ORDER

There is no penalty or corrective procedure for drawing tiles out of order, i.e., completing a play and drawing tiles before your opponent has replenished her rack from her previous turn. (See Guideline 7.)

D. KEEPING TILES ON THE RACK

Keep your tiles on your rack unless you are moving them to or from the bag, board or table during a listed procedure. Although you are free to change your play during your turn, do not use the board as a physical working area while deciding on a play.

E. COUNTING TILES DURING THE GAME

When using smooth tiles, you may put your hand into the bag and count the tiles remaining.

When using indented tiles, you may count the tiles remaining unless your opponent objects, in which case a staff member may be called to count the tiles.

The player whose clock is running has first rights to the bag for a

tile count. If your opponent's clock is running and she requests the bag, comply at once.

While counting tiles, hold the bag at eye level or higher and avert your eyes. Show your open palm with fingers stretched apart to your opponent just before reaching inside the bag.

F. ORIENTATION OF TILES AND BOARD

1. The orientation of words played, left to right and top to bottom, is established by the first successful play of the game. The orientation of a majority of the tiles of the first play shall be the established orientation for the game. You may challenge off the board any subsequent word that does not follow the initial orientation. The first play of the game should conform with the orientation of the bonus-square lettering. If it does not, you may correct it before the second successful play on the board is completed; after that, the orientation of the bonus-square lettering is irrelevant.

2. Place tiles on the board in the correct orientation, with the letter value in the lower right corner. You may correct a misoriented tile only during your turn or when the clock is neutralized for some other reason.

If your opponent plays a misoriented tile and ends her turn without correcting it, you may voice an objection, specific to that incident, before your subsequent turn ends. After three such timely objections, you may notify the Director and receive an extra minute of playing time for that game.

3. During your turn, you may rotate the board to the viewing angle you prefer. Do not touch the board when your opponent's clock is running.

G. EXCHANGING TILES

You may use your turn to exchange one or more tiles on your rack for new tiles, provided there are at least seven tiles in the bag. The exchange constitutes your entire turn and scores zero. The procedure:

1. Announce how many tiles you wish to exchange.

2. Place the tiles to be exchanged face down on the table, leaving tiles to be kept on the rack. If all seven tiles are to be exchanged, it is allowable to leave them on the rack while drawing new tiles.

3. Start the opponent's clock.

4. Draw new tiles from the bag and place them face down on the table to verify the count. It is allowable to place the new tiles directly on your rack, but it is not advised.

5. Put the replaced tiles in the bag and shuffle the bag.

6. Put the newly drawn tiles on the rack.

H. IMPROPER TILE EXCHANGE - PENALTIES

7. If there is a discrepancy between the number of tiles placed face down on the table and the number of tiles announced, the tiles placed face down on the table shall be exchanged. Your opponent must be alerted to the situation.

8. If "Exchange" is announced but no number is specified, and NO tiles are placed on the table, the turn counts as a pass and no tiles may be exchanged. (Note the 7 tile exception at G.2. on the previous page.)

9. There is no penalty for putting the unwanted tiles into the bag before drawing new tiles. Note that you may get back some of the unwanted tiles.

10. If an exchange occurs when fewer than seven tiles remain in the bag, the clock is neutralized while the situation is resolved. The penalty depends on when the infraction is noticed, as follows:

a. You announce your exchange, put tiles face down, and start opponent's clock, but you have not yet drawn new tiles. In this case, your turn is a pass, and the facedown tiles are returned to your rack.

b. You have drawn at least 1 new tile but you have not yet placed any new tiles on your rack, and the old tiles are not yet placed in the bag. In this case, your turn is a pass. New tiles are shown to both players and then returned to the bag. Old tiles are returned to your rack.

EXCHANGING TILES

You may use your turn to exchange one or more tiles on your rack for new tiles, provided there are at least seven tiles in the bag. The exchange constitutes your entire turn and scores zero. The procedure:

1. Announce how many tiles you wish to exchange.

2. Place the tiles to be exchanged face down on the table, leaving tiles to be kept on the rack. If all seven tiles are to be exchanged, it is allowable to leave them on the rack while drawing new tiles.

3. Start the opponent's clock.

4. Draw new tiles from the bag and place them face down on the table to verify the count. It is allowable to place the new tiles directly on your rack, but it is not advised.

5. Put the replaced tiles in the bag and shuffle the bag.

6. Put the newly drawn tiles on the rack.

c. You have put old tiles in the bag but you have not yet placed any new tiles on your rack. In this case, your opponent looks at the new tiles and all tiles in the bag plus 2 tiles from your rack, and has one minute to give you the appropriate number of tiles. Remaining tiles go in the bag.

d. You have put old tiles in the bag and you have combined at least one new tile with at least one of the old tiles. In this case you add all of the new tiles to your rack, your opponent looks at $X + 2$ tiles (at most 7) (X being the number of tiles exchanged) and all the tiles in the bag, and has one minute to give you $X + 2$ tiles. Remaining tiles go in the bag.

e. Your inappropriate exchange is noticed only after your opponent has made his next play and placed at least one new tile on his rack. In this case 30 points are subtracted from your score. If opponent has made his next play but has not yet placed at least one new tile on his rack, then follow D above.

I. PASSING

You may pass your turn at any time during the game, scoring zero. Passing is not exchanging. Passing does nothing to change the board or your rack. To pass, announce that you are passing and start your opponent's clock.

For clarity, we recommend saying "pass zero," though this is not mandatory.

J. PLAYING THE BLANK

1. Designating the Blank

When playing a blank tile, you must state what letter it represents, print or circle that letter on a separate piece of paper, and show this paper to your opponent, all before ending your turn. If you neglect any of these actions, your opponent may neutralize the clock until you comply.

You may change a blank tile's designation during your turn, but once your turn has ended the designation cannot be changed for the rest of the game.

2. Verifying the Blank

When you play a tile as a blank, it is your opponent's responsibility to verify that it is in fact a blank. If a blank you played is found to be false after your turn has ended but before your opponent's subsequent turn ends, you must remove all tiles played that turn and score zero for the turn. If you have already drawn tiles, they are treated as extra tiles under the overdraw penalty (Section II.B). A false blank detected after your opponent's subsequent turn ends remains on the board as designated, and no penalty applies.

K. COMPLETING A TURN

Sequentially, this is how a turn proceeds:

- 1.** After your opponent's turn ends, record the cumulative score before beginning your play.

2. Position your tiles on the board. During your turn you may remove or reposition your tiles as you like to change your play.
3. Designate the blank, if applicable.
4. Declare the score.
5. Start your opponent's clock, ending your turn.
6. Record the cumulative score to that point in the game. You may NOT pre-record the cumulative score.
7. Draw tiles to replenish your rack.
8. Track tiles, if desired.
EXCEPTION: Steps 1 and 6, recording the cumulative score, are waived if there are no tiles remaining to draw.

L. CHALLENGES AND ADJUDICATION

1. Challenging the Play

When your opponent's turn ends, you may challenge any word(s) formed on that play. To do so, call "challenge" and neutralize the clock. A challenge announcement before your opponent's turn ends is void and improper.

2. Holding the Play

If you do not challenge at once but are considering a challenge, call "hold" to notify your opponent not to draw replacement tiles. Once your clock is started, you may hold or challenge the play within 20 seconds, or until your opponent has performed steps 1 through 6 of Section K above (Completing a Turn) and has drawn at least one tile. After that the play cannot be held or challenged. (If your opponent begins to draw tiles before starting your clock, see Section II. M)

COMPLETING THE TURN

Sequentially, this is how a turn proceeds:

1. After your opponent's turn ends, record the cumulative score before beginning your play.
2. Position your tiles on the board. During your turn you may remove or reposition your tiles as you like to change your play.
3. Designate the blank, if applicable.
4. Declare the score.
5. Start your opponent's clock, ending your turn.
6. Record the cumulative score to that point in the game. You may NOT pre-record the cumulative score.
7. Draw tiles to replenish your rack.
8. Track tiles, if desired.

EXCEPTION: Steps 1 and 6, recording the cumulative score, are waived if there are no tiles remaining to draw.

A verbal challenge during the allowed period is binding.

Recording a score or verbally accepting the play does not affect your right to hold or challenge. However, once you've said 'okay', and then you change your mind and want to hold, you may no longer do so. You may however challenge without the hold.

EXCEPTION: When "hold" is called and there are NO tiles left to draw, then accepting the play is binding. In other words, with no tiles left to draw, once you've accepted the play, you can't change your mind. If there are tiles left to draw, then you may change your mind following the usual "hold" and "challenge" rules.

A player may hold only because of uncertainty about whether to challenge, not solely to delay opponent's replenishing her rack.

Players are advised to move the tile bag to their side of the board after saying hold to avoid having the opponent draw tiles inadvertently.

3. Courtesy Rule

If you call "hold," your clock continues to run, and there is no limit on the time you may take to challenge or release the hold. However, after one minute of hold time has elapsed, your opponent may draw and look at replacement tiles, keeping them separate from any unplayed tiles. If you then successfully challenge the play, your opponent shows the replacement tiles to you and returns them to the bag before removing her play from the board.

4. Challenge Slips

When challenging a play, neutralize the clock, alert the Word Judge and record on a challenge slip the word(s) you are challenging. Your opponent may require you to use a challenge slip if you neglect to do so. Have your opponent verify the spelling and legibility of words on the slip, correcting if necessary. The Word Judge looks up only the words on the challenge slip, after confirming that they correspond to words actually played and requiring the players to resolve the discrepancy if they do not. For computer adjudications, see Appendix C, pages 16-18.

5. Adjudicating Challenges

Only the Director or designated staff or computer may rule on the validity of a challenged word.

If any word you challenge is judged unacceptable, the Word Judge labels the play "unacceptable." Your opponent returns the tiles played to her rack and then starts your clock, losing her turn and scoring zero. The Word Judge does not specify which word(s) are unacceptable.

If all the words you challenge are judged acceptable, the Word Judge labels the play "acceptable." The play remains on the board and you start your opponent's clock, losing your turn and scoring zero. Once an adjudication has been made, further words formed on the same play cannot be challenged.

6. Requesting a Review

Either player may request a review of the challenge ruling and may obtain a third adjudication if the first two differ, or at the Director's discretion.

7. Erroneous Adjudication

If you lose a turn inappropriately because of an erroneous adjudication, and you notify the Director before leaving the tournament area for the day, your cumulative point spread will be increased by an amount equal to the value of the play (as verified by the score sheet and your opponent) plus 25 points.

8. Misunderstanding the Blank's Designation

If you challenge a play because you misunderstood the designation of a blank tile, you may withdraw the challenge without penalty.

M. END-OF-TURN IRREGULARITIES

If you make a play, announce the score and draw a tile before starting your opponent's clock, your turn ends. Your opponent has 20 seconds to hold the play. If you draw tiles before recording the cumulative score, your opponent has 20 seconds to hold the play. If in either of these situations she then successfully challenges, and you have already drawn tiles, they are treated as extra tiles under the overdraw penalty (Section II.B).(See Guideline 26.)

N. VERIFYING THE GAME SCORE

Throughout the game either side may ask for verification of the cumulative score provided it is that side's turn to play. If you are asked to verify the cumulative score, respond by agreeing or disagreeing with the stated score. Neutralize the clock only to resolve a discrepancy.

O. ANNOUNCING AN INCORRECT SCORE

If your opponent ends her turn having announced an incorrect score for the play, you may voice an objection, specific to that incident, before your subsequent turn ends. After every three such timely objections, you may notify the Director and receive an extra minute of playing time for that game.

P. LEAVING THE PLAYING AREA DURING A GAME

If you must leave the playing area during the game, do so only after making a play, starting your opponent's clock and recording the cumulative score. Do not draw tiles. If your opponent makes a play while you are gone, she starts your clock and records the cumulative score, but does not draw tiles. Upon your return she must point out her play; you then have five seconds to hold or challenge the play.

Q. OBSERVING INFRACTIONS

Bring to the attention of the relevant players or staff any rules violation or improper situation that you observe in your own game or other games.

1. Suggest that the affected player ask for a second opinion if you think a ruling or word adjudication is incorrect.
2. Prompt the Word Judge to check the *Long List* for words of ten or more letters.

3. Inform the players involved if a player has more than seven tiles on her rack.

4. Alert players to stray tiles in their area.

DO NOT alert players at games other than your own when you notice mistakes regarding either scores or the time clock. Such mistakes are the sole responsibility of the players themselves.

III. ENDING THE GAME

A. FINAL PLAY

The game ends when:

1. One player goes out when she successfully plays all of her tiles when none remain to be drawn, or
2. There are six successive scores of zero resulting from passes, exchanges or challenges and the cumulative game score is not zero-zero.
3. There is no penalty for challenging the going-out play. However, if a lost tile is found before a last play is adjudicated, and that tile goes to the player being challenged, then the challenge may be rescinded.

B. NEUTRALIZING THE CLOCK ON THE OUT PLAY

When making a play to go out, you must neutralize the clock, **NOT** start your opponent's clock. If you do start the clock, any overtime penalty or increase in penalty you thereby cause does not apply.

Once you neutralize the clock, your opponent has five seconds to voice "hold" or "challenge." If she does not, the game ends.

If your opponent holds the play, start her clock. It runs until she releases the hold (ending the game) or challenges. An unsuccessful challenge ends the game.

If the clock is not neutralized after the final play of the game, the game is considered over and the clock considered neutralized five seconds after either player reveals her unused tiles or declares their total point value.

C. ADJUSTING THE SCORE

1. Unplayed Tiles

If you go out, increase your score by double the total value of the unplayed tiles on your opponent's rack. Her score does not change.

If the game ends with neither player going out, each player reduces her score by the total value of the tiles remaining on her rack.

2. Overtime

If you use more than your allotted 25 minutes, reduce your score by 10 points for each minute of overtime or fraction thereof. A digital clock is not in overtime when it reads 0:00 or -0:00.

D. WINNING THE GAME

The player with the highest adjusted score wins the game. If both players have the same adjusted score, the game is a tie, and each player is awarded one-half (1/2) a win.

E. RECOUNTING THE GAME

Either player, or both, may recount a game. No third party should participate. If your opponent wishes to recount, you must provide your score sheet whether or not you participate.

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

The Director may call an end to a recount that interferes with tournament function. In such a case, the Director will adjudicate the result by applying any adjustments that have so far been agreed upon by the recounters. In addition, if the score for any individual play(s) is disputed by both players and cannot be resolved, the Director may intervene to verify the score for ONLY that disputed play(s).

The Director is also advised to complete an Incident Report for the NSA about this situation.

F. RECORDING THE GAME

When the game is over, fill out your contestant scorecard and sign your opponent's card, thereby attesting that the scores recorded are correct. When both cards are signed, no further scoring adjustments may be made, unless both players, in agreement, notify the Director that there was a scoring error.

Leave the tiles on the board after the game to facilitate the next pre-game count.

G. BYES AND FORFEITS

1. If you fail to show up for a scheduled game, you receive a forfeit loss, with 50 points subtracted from your total spread; and your designated opponent receives a forfeit win, with 50 points added to her total spread. However, you may postpone a game without forfeit if both your opponent and the Director agree.

2. If you must leave a game in progress, and you and your opponent cannot finish at a later time agreeable to both of you and the Director, you receive a forfeit loss for that game. If you are ahead in score when you leave, 50 points are subtracted from your total spread. If you are behind, 50 points plus the amount you are behind are subtracted from your total spread.

Byes and forfeits are not used in computing new ratings.

A game that begins with both players present and is then forfeited is rated as a completed game.

A game is considered to have begun when the first player has drawn at least one tile while the second player is alerted to this action.

3. A bye counts as a win, with 50 points added to your total spread.

APPENDIX A: BASIC RULES OF PLAY AND SCORING

I. MAKING PLAYS

A. The First Play of the Game

The first player places two or more letters on the board to form a word in either a horizontal or vertical position, with one tile covering the center pink square. The center pink square indicates Double Word Score. Any player has the option of passing or exchanging tiles instead of playing. See main tournament rules (pages 6-8, Sections II.G., II.H and II.I) for details regarding passing and exchanging.

B. Subsequent Plays

The game continues as players add one or more letters to those already played on the board to form a new word or words. All words added to the board must touch words already formed and must make new words wherever they touch existing words. The player gets credit for all words formed in this fashion. Diagonal words are not permitted. All tiles added to the board in any individual play must help to spell one main horizontal or vertical word; otherwise the play may be successfully challenged off the board.

C. How New Words are Formed on the Board

Assume "ARM" is already on the board. You may:

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

Example: "HARM, "ARMED", "CHARMED", "ARMS."

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

Example:

	A
H	ARM
A	I
D	D

 or

A
ARM
I
D

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

Example:
MEAL
ARM

II. SCORING

A. Letter Values

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

B. Scoring Each Play

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

C. Double and Triple Letter Bonus Squares

1. A light blue square doubles the score of a letter placed on it.
2. A dark blue square triples the score of a letter placed on it.

D. Double and Triple Word Bonus Squares

1. A pink square, including the center square, doubles the score of an entire word when one of its letters is placed on it.
2. A red square triples the score for an entire word when one of its letters is placed on it.

E. Score DLSs and TLSs before DWSs and TWSs

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

F. Double-Double (DWS-DWS)

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

G. Triple-Triple (TWS-TWS)

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

H. Bonus Squares Score on One Turn Only

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

I. Using the Blank on a DWS or TWS

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

J. Scoring with Two or More Words

When two or more words are formed in the same play, the turn score is the sum of each separate word's score. The common letter(s) are counted (with full premium value, if any) for each word.

K. Using All Seven Tiles in One Play

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

APPENDIX B: SAND TIMERS

A. When to Use Sand Timers

When clocks are available, they must be used instead of sand timers.

B. Time Limit

Each game using three-minute sand timers shall be stopped after 54 minutes. After time has been called, each player may make one more play, replenishing her rack if possible, and then compute the adjusted final scores. A player may not delay playing until just before time is called in order to secure the last post-time turn.

C. Tapping Sand Down

Each player shall receive approximately three minutes per move. When the top of the sand timer is almost empty (five to ten seconds) it is the responsibility of the opponent to tap the top of the timer to ensure that the last few grains of sand flow smoothly to the bottom, and to indicate to the player that there is only a short time left. If opponent fails to do this, and the timer for the player's turn empties, the player has a five-second grace period (after becoming aware of the situation) to make a play.

D. Exceeding the Three-Minute Limit

A player loses her turn if all the sand has dropped and one of the following occurs:

1. The player has failed to announce her score within 10 seconds after opponent has announced the time shortage.
2. The player has failed to announce her score within 10 seconds after being notified that all the sand has dropped (no warning was given prior to sand dropping).

APPENDIX C: SOFTWARE SELF-LOOKUPS (SSL)

The National SCRABBLE® Association recognizes the accuracy, efficiency and cost-saving advantages of using appropriate software to adjudicate challenges. Years of testing at sanctioned tournaments with few glitches has convinced us to urge all of our directors to explore using one of these programs for adjudications. Two such programs are currently being used. One, John Babina's "Word Judge" program, will be used at the 2004 National SCRABBLE® Championship.

A. Rules for Software Self-Lookups.

1. The challenger records the word(s) being challenged on a challenge slip. The slip is verified by the opponent at the table.
2. Both players place their tiles facedown on the table*, in plain sight.
3. Both players go to the computer station, making sure to avoid disturbing others who are still playing. Once the players have left their seats and arrived at the computer, there will be no corrections to the challenge slip unless both players agree that a word was written down wrongly and does not match what was played on the board.

4. The challenger types in the word or words being challenged. **All** words must be typed into the computer before the judgment is made.** The challenger does not hit the key that adjudicates the play.
5. Both players verify that the challenged word(s) have been typed in as played on the board and written on the challenge slip.
6. The player being challenged presses the key that adjudicates the play. This key should be clearly marked "JUDGE" if it is not the "Enter" key.
7. The result of the adjudication is marked on the Challenge Slip.
8. Some directors collect all challenges slips. In that case the slip should be dropped into a container which holds the adjudicated challenge slips.
9. Players return to their table with the appropriate player losing his/her turn. Both players' tiles must be placed back onto their racks before the timer is started.
10. The computer adjudication is final, unless there is some reason to believe that either the computer or the program is flawed, or the words were not typed in correctly. In the latter case the players may re-input the challenged words and readjudicate them.

* If a player has been challenged after drawing new tiles and keeping them separate, the separated tiles must continue to be separated.

** It is against the rules to adjudicate each word separately. There will be a lengthy grace period for adjusting to these new procedures, after which time a penalty will be imposed.

It is strongly urged that players place a Contestant Score Card on their board while being away, in order to signal others, "Don't touch this board!"

At tournaments where Software Lookups are used, players with physical challenges may inform the director prior to the event that they will require a Word Judge to come to their table for challenges.

Players without physical challenges are strongly urged to take advantage of Software Lookups. That's because if the procedures are followed, there will be zero mistakes in adjudications, as opposed to some small percentage of errors made by a human Word Judge. And, in many instances, your adjudications will be resolved much faster.

Those players with no physical challenges who insist on human word judges have the right to use one.

B. SSL Mandates and Guidelines

1. Directors must ensure that all players are able to leave and return to their tables without disrupting other games. If there are three or more games to a table, there should be sufficient

- space behind both sides of the table to allow players to get up without having to ask players of adjoining games to move.
2. We recommend providing a collection box for old challenge slips to help minimize trash and avoid accidentally revealing adjudication results to other players.
 3. Directors must provide an experienced software adjudication person to educate new players how to use the Software Self-Lookups. We recommend a brief session prior to the start of the first round for anyone inexperienced with Software Lookups.
 4. Currently, only the LOOK and Word Judge programs are approved by the NSA for use at our sanctioned tournaments. If you use the LOOK program, make sure you set it to OWL and instruct all players NEVER to change the setting at any time prior to the end of the tournament. If you use Word Judge, please make sure you attach a sticker labeled "JUDGE" to the TAB key.
 5. Directors using LOOK: Please note that there are no words longer than 9 letters in LOOK. For words ten letters or longer, first review the Official Tournament and Club Word List, followed by the Long List.

APPENDIX D: GUIDELINES FOR PLAYERS AND DIRECTORS

PLAYING WITH A SPIRIT OF FUN, GUIDED BY A SENSE OF FAIRNESS

Over the years the Rules Committee has recognized the difficulties of defining "ironclad" rules. Players with a "win at all costs" attitude may find ways to circumvent the strict interpretation of rules, or play on opponents' known ignorance of them with unfair results. In some cases these players point the way to creating better rules. However, in many cases this attitude simply fosters an atmosphere among experienced players of taking advantage of the unwary. We may all try to use words that others have not yet learned, but when it comes to rules, it is more appropriate to teach the uninitiated the correct way to follow our procedures than to take advantage of them.

To enlarge our family of SCRABBLE® game players, we need to promote the sheer enjoyment of playing the game, win or lose. In keeping with this policy, we wish to clarify some "gray" areas, keeping in mind that players should be considered innocent of any willful wrongdoing until there is sufficient evidence to the contrary.

This general principle should guide Directors in unusual situations: No player should benefit by an irregularity s/he created, however accidentally, and no player should be harmed (or potentially harmed) as the result of an irregularity s/he had no part in creating.

There are certain situations that occur repeatedly in SCRABBLE® game tournaments in which players may not have a clear understanding of what is appropriate, for they may not be specifically discussed in the Rules. What follows are several guidelines:

1. Stuck with an Unplayable Tile

Imagine that a player is “stuck” with one letter on his/her rack. There is no way to play the letter on the board and form an acceptable word. Should the player also be very short of time, the opponent, with a full rack, may decide to take turns playing two phoneys and a real word, and then repeating this action several times, in order to push the player into a penalty time. This is considered highly unethical. A Director who becomes aware of this situation is advised to erase such a time penalty. While it is acceptable (and advisable) in many situations to knowingly play phoneys, the above behavior is contrary to the spirit of the game.

2. Undesignated Blanks

If a player has not recorded what letter the blank tile represents, *and* if a disagreement arises later on in the game as to what the blank tile should be, then the player who did record the blank shall define the blank as s/he recorded it. However, if neither player recorded the blank and a disagreement arises later on, the player whose turn it is shall define the blank. In this case, the opponent may challenge all words formed using the blank (as well as other words formed on the play). However if the original play (as understood by the current player) using the blank was initially phoney (but unchallenged then), then the Director should be consulted to determine if there is willful misconduct on either side (such as announcing one letter vocally and not recording it, while later on calling the blank a different letter). In this case the Director shall have the power to overrule the penalty for this particular challenge, and file an Incident Report with the NSA.

THE CLOCK MAY BE NEUTRALIZED WHEN:

1. The players do not agree on the score.
2. A rule, procedure or question needs clarification from the Director.
3. A player challenges a play.
4. One or both players have not followed appropriate tournament procedures or behavior. *Examples:* the blank has not been properly designated; tiles are overdrawn; there has been an inappropriate tile exchange; one player is speaking aloud during play.
5. A late player, whose timer has been started by the Director, arrives to start his game.
6. One or more tiles are discovered outside the bag in the vicinity of the game board.
7. A player uses all his remaining tiles, and no tiles are left to draw.

3. Shuffling Tiles Before the Game Begins

It is appropriate for the first player to ask his/her opponent if (s)he would like to shuffle the tiles, but it is not necessary. The second player is advised to be alert to when his/her game will begin, and simply take the tile bag and shuffle the tiles.

4. Finding the Missing Tile(s)

It sometimes happens that a tile(s) is discovered under the board or table after all or most of the tiles are played. What should happen?

If the game is over with the bag empty and one player having “gone out”, then the extra tile(s) is (are) not added to the game. However, if the game is not over (meaning there is at least one tile on both players’ racks or a play has been held or challenged) then the extra tile(s), unseen if possible, should be put into the bag and an effort should be made to determine who should have drawn it (them).

That player should then receive the tile(s) and play continues with no penalty. If it cannot be determined, or there is not enough time to determine, who should receive the tile(s), then the game shall proceed without it (them). Only the two players and the Director may participate in making such determinations.

However, if within 5 seconds of the last play made, with someone having ended the game, either player realizes that there is still at least one tile in the bag, then the remedy is that the player who should have gotten it, GETS IT, and either the game continues (if the player who went out should have gotten it) or the tile is scored against the person still with tiles on his/her rack.

5. When the Timer is Still Ticking After the Game

If the player going out forgets to neutralize the clock (either starting opponent’s time or keeping his/her own timer running), it is unethical for either player to take advantage of this by delaying the verification of the final score in any way in order to earn penalty points from an unwary opponent.

The Director will have the power to intervene to erase a time penalty should the evidence gathered prove sufficient to do so. In this situation the players should mutually try to ascertain when the unused tiles were revealed to help recall the exact moment of the end of the game.

6. Delayed Tile Tracking

Tracking tiles is the act of recording what letters have been played on the board. Many players track tiles. Tracking can be helpful when trying to determine the best play at any time during the game. The NSA provides space on its Score Sheet for doing so. If players delay their drawing tiles after forming a word on the board in order to track their tiles first, it can delay the opponent from drawing tiles if the opponent plays quickly. To avoid this situation we advise players to draw tiles prior to tracking.

If a player is delayed from drawing tiles due to his opponent’s tracking tiles prior to drawing, then the player may call the Director

to give his opponent a warning. After every subsequent similar infraction, during that game, by opponent, the player shall earn 1 extra minute of playing time. Note that this rule does not penalize a player every time s/he tracks prior to drawing, but only when the opponent has played quickly and the tracking violation actually delays opponent from drawing.

7. Drawing Tiles Out of Order

If a player draws tiles out of order (see Section II.C.) when there are fewer than 14 tiles in the bag, the circumstances could warrant investigation by the Director. Drawing tiles out of order can affect the outcome of a game when very few tiles remain to be drawn. Honest mistakes should be acknowledged and accepted, but the Director may want to penalize a player 50 spread points, particularly if fewer than 7 tiles remain to be drawn. Each case should be considered individually since either player may be acting inappropriately, depending on the specific tiles remaining.

8. Colluding with the Opponent or Purposefully Losing

The tournament culture and rating system thrives best only when each player strives to play their very best. Any player who has been found guilty of purposefully either losing a game or losing by a much bigger spread than necessary may lose his/her right to participate in future National SCRABBLE® Association tournaments.

9. Inappropriate Behavior

Speaking aloud during play is often distracting and can mislead the opponent. A player who does this purposefully is considered to be acting unethically.

It is every player's right to ask his/her opponent to remain silent during play. While many people often play the game in informal social gatherings where it may be accepted by the group to talk during play, players should understand that tournament conditions require that each player respect his/her opponent's right to concentrate fully during play. The Director has the power to intervene on behalf of a player whose opponent is showing such disrespect. Here are some examples of what you should **NOT** do:

- a.** Purposefully mispronounce your play ("RE-STING"), hoping to draw a careless challenge.
- b.** Play a phony-looking word which you know is acceptable (CALENDER) but intentionally saying something like: "I'm not sure if it ends in AR or ER."
- c.** Saying "You may want to challenge this," either when you know the word is good, or when it's not good, and you feel your statement will suppress a challenge. In the first case you may not get challenged, but your opponent may be reluctant to add an S to the word.
- d.** Playing an obviously acceptable word (e.g., APRICOTS) and doing a lot of talking about it ("It took me a long time to find this word

with these letters”) to divert attention from a phoney hook you used to get your word down (e.g., the S hooked onto AH).

- e. The game is close, the Q is still out and whoever gets it will be stuck with it. You play a letter and draw a tile, leaving 3 others. Immediately you begin to moan about your bad luck. Your opponent feels s/he can safely play 3 tiles and draw the last 3 from the bag. What will s/he think about your moaning when s/he draws the Q?

10. Cheating

All players are honor bound not to cheat. Directors are urged to take seriously any suspicion of cheating and immediately, but discreetly, question the offending player in order to limit further suspicion and/or penalize the offending player.

11. Word Judging

After playing at a SCRABBLE® Game Club or several tournaments, most players find themselves acting as a Word Judge on occasion. Here are some guidelines for effective word judging:

- a. When you arrive at the table, ask for a Challenge Slip with all the challenged words printed clearly on it. If one or both of the players just point to the challenged word on the board, even if it's obvious, ask again for a Challenge Slip.
- b. Once you have the Challenge Slip, check to see if the word(s) being challenged are spelled out on the board the same as on the Challenge Slip. If not, give the Slip back and say: "I see a discrepancy." If you have any doubt about the spelling of one of the challenged words, please ask the players to clarify its spelling.
- c. Turn your back to the players and look up all the words, noting if any are unacceptable. If they are all acceptable, mark the "acceptable" square on the Challenge Slip and return it to the players, saying aloud "Acceptable."

If any words are unacceptable, check to see if these have more than 9 letters. If so, make sure to research them again in the *Long List*. If you still can't find the word, mark the "unacceptable" square on the Slip and return it to the players and say "unacceptable."

- d. When a challenge involves a blank, *don't ever ask*, "Is the blank a...?" naming whatever letter you imagine. There should be a printed record of what the blank is, which you may ask for. If not, ask only, "What letter is the blank?"
- e. Never show any personal responses to a challenge. This includes avoiding giving any signs of approval or disapproval of the challenge. The Word Judge should not engage the players at all except to learn what the challenged words are and to adjudicate them. Any other interaction between the Word Judge and the players is considered inappropriate.

- f. It is inappropriate to watch over players' shoulders and research words that either have been or can be played. This can give extra information to the opponent, influence the game unnecessarily, and be disturbing to the players.
- g. Despite the number of pending challenges, *do not rush* your adjudication.
- h. If you researched the initial challenge, always have *another person*, rather than yourself, research the Second Opinion.
- i. Verify that the players proceed with an accurate follow-through of the adjudication result, noting that the appropriate person lose his or her turn.

However, the Word Judge is NOT allowed to communicate anything that is concerned with the time clock. This specifically refers to whether the correct timer has been started. However, if the Word Judge also happens to be the Director, s/he may intervene as s/he believes appropriate. The bottom line is that players must pay close attention to their timers.

12. Changing Game Results

Section III.F, regarding changing the outcome or score of a game, refers only to the situation where the players' Contestant Score Cards (CSC) already show identical results for a particular game, and one or both players later realize that those results are incorrect.

In contrast, whenever an individual game result is not recorded identically on both players' CSCs, it is the Director's responsibility to make a concerted effort to determine and post the "actual" result.

If a Director uses a "Tally Sheet" to post tournament results, on which both players have signed and recorded the game results, then it is not mandatory to verify each CSC. By signing the Tally Sheet, the players have agreed that it records an accurate game result. However, the Director could review any evidence that suggests a Tally Sheet is inconsistent with the players' CSCs. In such disputes, when there is too little evidence for resolving the situation, the Director is advised to maintain the Tally Sheet as the final arbiter.

If, prior to the end of the tournament, both players have not signed a Tally Sheet, the tournament staff should require the missing signatures/initials from the player(s), or at least verify the game's results on the CSCs.

13. End of the Game Underdrawing

Near the end of the game, if Player One draws too few tiles, while Player Two subsequently draws the remaining tiles after making his/her play, and this mistake is caught prior to Player Two completing his/her *next* play, then Player Two must, within one

minute, choose and give to Player One the appropriate number of tiles from his/her own rack. The game continues at that point. *Example:* With four tiles in the bag, Player One makes a three-tile play and draws only two tiles. Now, Player Two plays and draws the remaining two tiles while Player One also plays again. At this point it is discovered that Player One should have drawn one more tile on his previous play. Player Two must give Player One whichever tile s/he prefers. However, if the underdrawing is discovered only after Player Two has played again and started the timer, then there is no penalty and the game continues.

14. Clock Courtesy

After the player going out neutralizes the clock, neither player should touch the clock until they both have signed each other's Score Card and/or Tally Sheet and/or agreed on the final score of the game. If the players cannot agree on the time penalty to be imposed, they should call the Director for help. The Director should make every effort to adjudicate the time penalty without touching the clock as well. However, in some cases that may be unavoidable.

This guideline is meant to overcome the potential hazard of a clock being jarred or adjusted so that the number of time penalty points is not easily determined. When both players agree that no time penalties are mandated, this guideline is not applicable.

15. Announcing the Play Again

Occasionally, a player's attention may be diverted from the board. It is in the spirit of the game for a player, upon request, to announce to the opponent what his/her previous play was, including the correct score.

16. Denying Opponent Visual Access to the Board

It is inappropriate for any player to prevent his/her opponent from seeing the board clearly. This includes using hands and/or fingers directly over the board to count played tiles.

17. Loose Tiles

Occasionally tiles accidentally fall out of the bag, either as a person is drawing tiles or when the bag is put down on the table. Sometimes loose tiles are discovered on the table but with nobody having seen them get there or admitting to having been involved with their getting there. When both players agree that such an occurrence has happened, the Director is advised to have the players return the tiles to the bag (with no penalties for overdrawing) and to continue on in the normal fashion from there.

18. A Rack with More than Seven Tiles

Directors, Word Judges and even fellow players should always identify either to the players and/or Director when a player has more than seven tiles. While accidental overdrawing can occur, a player should immediately announce the overdraw. Any intention to hide that fact is considered cheating. The Director should be notified immediately and following an investigation, the offender penalized if the evidence is convincing.

19. Forfeits

A. If a player is late for a game, the Director may start his/her clock, no earlier than three minutes after the start of the round. When the player's clock has run down all 25 minutes, the game is over, and the missing player forfeits the game with a loss and -50pt. spread. If the player arrives any time earlier s/he may stop the clock, get situated, count tiles, determine who's first and then proceed with the game with whatever time remains on his/her clock. S/he may also decide to forfeit the game at that point.

B. At the end of a round, if the Director believes that allowing any more games to finish naturally threatens the timely running of the tournament, s/he may stop such games at that point with the scores standing as is.

The Director should advise the players a few minutes prior to ending the game, so they may be given warning and attempt to finish the game themselves. The Director must use his/her good judgment and discretion to determine if one player is taking advantage of this rule to win, against the spirit of the game, using unnecessary delay-of-game tactics.

C. When there is no official starting time for the next round, as sometimes happens on the 2nd, 3rd or 4th round of a playing session, the Director should avoid starting late players' clocks, though warnings, followed by appropriate clock-startings, may be issued to repeat offenders who abuse this situation. Players not involved in recounts should be allowed a 10-minute break between rounds. After a full-game recount, if the next round has already been in progress for at least 10 minutes, the break is limited to 5 minutes.

20. Playing with Overdrawn Rack

When it can be sufficiently shown that a player made a play with 8 or more tiles in his possession, then, if the opponent has not yet made a play on the board and started the offender's clock, and the misplay is discovered, the play should be withdrawn, the overdraw procedure be followed, and the offender now loses his/her turn.

If the opponent has already made a play and started the offender's clock and the transgression is discovered, the offender simply loses the score for that illegal play. However, in either case, the incident should be reported to the Director. It is highly unethical to make a play with 8 tiles on your rack. Three such incidents in a tournament by the same individual is punishable by forfeiting any awards earned from the event and forfeiting any remaining games.

21. Abusive Behavior

Abusive and/or offensive behavior will not be tolerated. Players who threaten, verbally abuse or are otherwise disruptive should be given

one warning to desist. Thereafter, the Director is strongly advised to remove the player(s) from the tournament.

22. Adjacent Tiles

Players are advised to avoid playing next to players who are using the same colored tiles as themselves. Failing to do this often leads to players mixing up the tiles to two different sets, with the result that their games have either fewer or more than the standard 100 tiles.

23. Extra Tiles in the Game

If Player A makes a play that includes tiles from an adjoining game, then upon being noticed before Player B announces his score after making his/her next play, the Director should remove the extra tiles and have Player A draw new tiles and make another play. If Player B has already announced his score for his next play following Player A's use of extra tiles, then the Director simply removes those unwanted tiles and replaces them with equivalent tiles from the bag. If this is not possible (for example: extra X on board), then those irreplaceable tiles remain on the board for the remainder of the game.

24. Opponent's Timer Already Started

What should happen when a Player A places his word on the board, announces his score and just before starting opponent's clock, one or both players realize that Player B's clock had been running during Player A's thinking time? When is Player A's turn considered over? When may Player B challenge?

In this situation, if Player A has already announced his score, then a challenge may be made. If Player A has not yet announced his score, then his turn is NOT complete, and so Player A may change his play.

25. Adjacent Games with Equivalent Tiles

If two adjacent games are about to use the same or nearly the same tiles, then one set of tiles should be changed. Which set? If one of the games is already in progress, then the other game should change tiles. If neither have begun, then the game using the first player's tiles should change. If both games are using the first player's tiles, then one player from each game may draw a tile randomly from the bag, and the player with the letter closest to Z changes his/her tiles.

26. Fast-bagging

A player may challenge his opponent until the opponent has either drawn a replacement tile or 20 seconds has elapsed, whichever comes first. Or, if an opponent wants to think about it, s/he may call "Hold!" within 20 seconds and ruminate for a longer time. Players are supposed to record their cumulative score after starting opponent's timer and before drawing new tiles. This couple of seconds, in theory, should usually be enough for the opponent to see the play and determine whether s/he wants to challenge or hold.

However, some players have been observed “fast-bagging.” Fast-bagging is the act of drawing tiles very quickly in order to force your opponent to accept your play. If your attention is drawn away from the board for a moment, and the player makes a play and draws quickly, you may not have had a chance to see what the play was, let alone decide whether you want to challenge. When a player does this s/he is taking advantage of the opponent, and this is simply unacceptable. Philosophically, the NSA prefers that if a player wants to challenge, s/he should be able to do so.

To this end, if an opponent does not have a full 2-3 seconds time to look at the play before being unable to challenge, then upon immediately calling the Director, the player may petition to be able to challenge. The Director, after hearing both sides, may choose to override the no-challenge rule and allow a challenge to occur.

27. Overdrawing the Overdrawer

If, when following the Overdraw Penalty, the opponent turns over too many tiles, then the remedy is that all of the original overdrawer’s tiles (“newly-drawn” tiles, if still separated from old tiles) are placed randomly face down on the table and the opponent draws X tiles randomly and places them in the bag unseen, “X” being the number of overdrawn tiles.

28. Silent Tile-Counts

It is inappropriate to mention aloud how many tiles are remaining at any time during the game. The reason for this is that players can and do make mistakes when counting tiles, causing misinformation to be passed on inadvertently to the opponent. The exception to this guideline is when a player realizes there may be fewer or more than 100 tiles in the set.

29. Kibitzing is a Privilege

It is considered a privilege to watch a game being played, looking at the players’ racks and plays. However, it is not a right. If any player wishes the observer, more commonly called “kibitzer,” to leave the area, s/he must do so. Kibitzing can be annoying or disturbing to some players. In some cases a player may gain valuable information about his/her opponent’s rack from the kibitzer’s demeanor as s/he watches the game. Please be respectful, and only kibitz when you’ve been given some signal that it’s okay.

30. Mixing the Tiles

Some players prefer mixing the tiles before or even after exchanging or drawing them. Anytime during a game that you wish to mix the tiles in the tile bag, limit the mixing time to 10 seconds. Further mixing may disturb those within earshot.

31. Tiles Above the Table

Never put any tiles below the plane of the table. All tiles must be kept in sight except when being transferred from rack to board (or vice versa in the case of a change in play) or bag (or table) to rack (or vice versa for exchanges). And the palm should be opened and face opponent whenever the hand goes into the bag.

32. Misinterpretations

It is the responsibility of every player, while playing, not only to guard at all times against any action of his/her own which might incur suspicion or misinterpretation, but also to immediately draw to the attention of his/her opponents any such action on their part.

33. Principle of Ethics

It is unethical to knowingly announce or verify an incorrect score; it is also unethical to knowingly allow an opponent's incorrect score, whether it be for one turn or the cumulative, to go unchallenged. We recognize that it's very easy to miscalculate a score, and that most players do so unintentionally at least occasionally, but to do so intentionally is considered cheating.

34. Looking at the Board and Neutralization

When the clock is neutralized in order to resolve some non-scoring issue during the game, players are instructed not to study their tiles and/or the board in preparation for the continuation of the game. In these types of situations, when neutralization lasts more than 5 seconds, tiles must be placed facedown on the table until there is a resolution, after which the tiles are replaced onto the rack prior to starting the clock.

The Rules Committee recognizes that many players may habitually though innocently or accidentally do any one or more of the above behaviors. We ask that Directors please be firm but unprejudiced while teaching the players the correct habits.



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