



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

## **Game Rules**

Version 1.0  
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## **Preamble**

These Rules (the WESPA Game Rules) are for use in international English-language word game tournaments. They establish international standards designed to facilitate play between players whose domestic norms may differ. These Rules apply at the World 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, and at domestic competitions of international significance.

If any situation arises 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 ruling binds the players. The Tournament Director should refer contested interpretations of these Rules to the WESPA Rules Committee for review.

The Tournament Director will determine factual disputes upon the balance of probabilities, and is entitled to take into account all relevant information in reaching decisions. WESPA is the sole body with power to review the decisions of the Tournament Director. Players' appeal rights are limited to those outlined in Rule 6.5 (Right of Appeal).

## **Part 1 - Equipment**

### **1.1 Standard Rules**

- (a) The WESPA Game Rules apply in addition to the standard game rules ('Standard Rules') endorsed by WESPA. The Standard Rules are listed in Appendix 1. They may be changed from time to time.
- (b) The WESPA Game Rules take precedence over the Standard Rules in the event of any discrepancy. Moreover:
  - (i) games played under the WESPA Game Rules must be played one on one, with both players keeping score; and
  - (ii) games played under the WESPA Game Rules do not end if both players pass twice in succession.

### **1.2 Word Source**

- (a) The official word source is endorsed by WESPA in consultation with the WESPA Dictionary Committee. The official word source is listed in Appendix 2. It may be changed from time to time.

- (b) Tournaments using these Rules must not deviate from the official word source in any respect.

## **1.3 The Game 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. Either player may request such a check. Under no circumstances may corrections be made once the game has started.

### **1.3.2 The Tiles**

- (a) Tiles that best achieve both tactile and visual indistinguishability are preferred for tournament play.
- (b) Tiles with a smooth letter face should be used wherever possible. Tiles without a smooth letter face are unacceptable unless the Tournament Director expressly approves their use.
- (c) Players may use their own set of tiles only 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 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 tactile, are undesirable. 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.

### **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. As a general guide, each edge of the playing grid should measure 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 game set must be in an acceptable state of repair.
- (b) 'An acceptable state of repair' includes:
  - (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**

- (a) 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.
- (b) If a problem with the timer arises during play, the Tournament Director must be notified. Depending on the nature of the problem, the Tournament Director may choose to adjust the time remaining for either player or both players.

### **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 these 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.

### **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 materials, including papers, brought to the table by an opponent.

- (b) The Tournament Director will resolve any dispute arising over the acceptability of such materials, including any score sheets from games already played in the tournament.
- (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 must aim to ensure that all players start approximately half their games in a tournament. Such systems may include:
  - (i) assignment of the start in each game by a software program employed in running 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.
- (c) When self-balancing starts are in use, any player who knowingly misrepresents his or her start/reply record is considered to be cheating.

## **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. No tiles may be drawn until both players have arrived.

### **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. No tiles may be drawn until both players have arrived.

### **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 will be recorded as a win for the opponent by a margin of 150 points.
- (b) If a game is forfeited under Rules 2.3.4 or 2.3.5, that game will 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 normal 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 (Holds) 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 normal 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 subsection (i), the Tournament Director is to apply Rule 6.2.6 (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 subsection (j) of Rule 6.2.2 (Examples of Unethical Behaviour Not Amounting to Cheating).
- (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 (Holds) 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 early in the game, it is common practice to perform Rule 3.2.1(a) above by observing the number of tiles played on the board to that point. 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) By pressing the timer in accordance with Rules 3.1.1 (Elements of the Turn), 3.2.1 (Elements of the Exchange) or 3.3.1 (Elements of the Pass), a player indicates 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 subsection (d) of Rule 3.5 (Keeping Score).
- (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 (Issuing a Challenge).

### **3.4.2 Elements Overlapping with Opponent's Subsequent Turn**

- (a) By pressing the timer in accordance with Rules 3.1.1 (Elements of the Turn), 3.2.1 (Elements of the Exchange) or 3.3.1 (Elements of the Pass), 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 subsection (m) of Rule 6.2.2 (Examples of Unethical Behaviour Not Amounting to Cheating).
- (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 normal 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, Rule 3.6.1 (Actions Reserved for Player On Move) and subsection (o) of Rule 6.2.2 (Examples of Unethical Behaviour Not Amounting to Cheating).
- (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. Rule 5.4 (Result Sheets) may be relevant.

## **3.6 Prerogatives of the Player On Move**

### **3.6.1 Actions Reserved for the 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 (unless the tiles were placed in an improper orientation by the opponent);
- (b) rotate or adjust the board; or
- (c) ask to verify scores with the opponent, who must co-operate.

### **3.6.2 Actions Where the 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 subsection (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 subsection (a), must ensure that the player on move is minimally disturbed by the act. Subsection (s) of Rule 6.2.2 (Examples of Unethical Behaviour Not Amounting to Cheating) 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 will not infringe Rule 3.6.2 (Actions Where Player On Move Has Priority);
- (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 must 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 be able to prevent the blank's identity being subsequently contested. Therefore:
  - (i) the player who plays the blank must, before completing the turn, record the blank's identity on a neutral sheet of paper such as the game result sheet; and
  - (ii) the opponent must ensure that this is done, neutralising the timer if necessary.
- (c) If the blank's identity is recorded in accordance with subsection (b), that record is determinative. A record on a player's personal score sheet is not determinative.
- (d) If the blank's identity is not recorded in accordance with subsection (b) and a dispute subsequently arises, the player on move may redesignate the blank. All words formed by the redesignation are taken to be words played in that player's next turn, and may therefore be challenged.
- (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) The Tournament Director may override subsection (d) if he or she believes that doing so is in the interests of fairness.

## **3.9 Drawing Tiles**

### **3.9.1 Bag Position**

When drawing from the bag, a player must:

- (a) hold the bag so 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. Subsection (c) of Rule 6.2.2 (Examples of Unethical Behaviour Not Amounting to Cheating) 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 overdrawn tiles. Both players should see the tiles.
  - (iii) The opponent selects  $X$  tiles to return to the bag and one to return to the overdrawing player.
- (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 overdrawn tiles. Both players should see the tiles.
  - (iii) The opponent selects  $X$  tiles to return to the bag and one to return to the overdrawing player.

### **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) the timer is neutralised;
- (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 overdrawn tiles.

### **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 subsection (h) of Rule 6.2.2 (Examples of Unethical Behaviour Not Amounting to Cheating)) and will trigger the procedure outlined in Rule 3.9.6 (Overdrawing Tiles (Opponent Notices)).

### **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 player has completed his or her next turn, then the opponent must choose and give to the player the appropriate number of tiles from his or her rack. There is no additional penalty.
- (c) If the underdrawing is discovered only after the player has completed his or her next turn, 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**

- (a) Subject to subsection (b), 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.
- (b) If the out of order draw leaves fewer tiles in the bag than the opponent would have rightfully drawn, all of the player's newly drawn tiles are treated as overdrawn tiles to which the following procedure applies:
  - (i) the overdraw procedure given in Rule 3.9.6 (Overdrawing Tiles (Opponent Notices)) is followed;
  - (ii) the opponent draws as many replacement tiles as are needed to complete his or her own draw;
  - (iii) any tiles remaining in the bag are replaced on the player's rack.

### **3.9.10 Drawing While Awaiting Adjudication**

Players must not draw tiles while awaiting the adjudication of a challenge.

## **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.

- (a) To issue a challenge, the player must:
  - (i) 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);
  - (ii) neutralise the timer;
  - (iii) write the word or words to be challenged legibly on a challenge slip;
  - (iv) seek agreement from the opponent that the writing on the challenge slip is legible and records a word or words played in the turn; and
  - (v) call for a runner.

Both players then await the result of the challenge.

- (b) 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).
- (c) 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 (or cover the tiles).
- (b) The timer may not be started after a self-run challenge until both players

are seated, all face-down tiles have been returned to players' racks, and either the score for the move has been re-announced or the tiles have been retracted (depending upon the result of the challenge).

#### **3.10.4 Self-Adjudicating**

Computer software may 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(a)(iii)-(v):

- (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 (or cover the tiles) 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 may not be started after a self-adjudicated challenge until both players are seated, all face-down tiles have been returned to players' racks, and either the score for the move has been re-announced or the tiles have been retracted (depending upon the result of the challenge).

Failure to observe the protocols of this Rule may be regarded as unethical: see subsection (u) of Rule 6.2.2 (Examples of Unethical Behaviour Not Amounting to Cheating).

#### **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 challenger 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 (Accepting the Turn) 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

(Elements of the Turn) 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 Holds**

- (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 (Elements of the Turn), 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 subsection (p) of Rule 6.2.2 (Examples of Unethical Behaviour Not Amounting to Cheating)).
- (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. If, however, the player has intermixed tiles in violation of subsection (a), the replacement tiles are treated as overdrawn tiles to which Rule 3.9.6 (Overdrawing Tiles (Opponent Notices)) applies in addition to any penalty imposed by the Tournament Director.

### **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.

### **3.10.12 Misadjudication**

If a player is challenged, and the challenge is discovered to have been misadjudicated, the error may be corrected if and only if:

- (a) no newly drawn tiles have touched the player's rack, or
- (b) no retracted tiles have touched the player's rack.

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**

- (a) 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.
- (b) A player whose opponent successfully challenges always loses that turn as per the Standard Rules. The challenger is penalised only if all challenged words are acceptable.
- (c) The following is a list of penalty conditions that WESPA considers standard:
  - (i) no penalty for an incorrect challenge ('single challenge');
  - (ii) five-point penalty per incorrectly challenged word;
  - (iii) five-point penalty per incorrectly challenged turn (regardless of the number of words challenged in the turn);
  - (iv) as in subsection (ii) or (iii), but using ten points instead of five;
  - (v) loss of turn for an incorrect challenge ('double challenge').
- (d) Other penalty conditions include incrementally increasing penalties. These are not considered standard. Examples are:
  - (i) no penalty for first incorrect challenge, loss of turn for subsequent incorrect challenges ('dingle challenge');
  - (ii) five-point penalty for first incorrect challenge, ten-point penalty for subsequent incorrect challenges;
  - (iii) 5-5-10-20-30 point (or similar) increasing penalties for incorrect challenges;
  - (iv) time penalties of 30-60 seconds for all incorrect challenges.

- (e) WESPA considers option (c)(ii) 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) placing tiles on the board such that the tiles do not all form part of one word;
  - (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 who believes that fewer than seven tiles remain in the bag may challenge the legality of an exchange if the opponent has announced the exchange and pressed the timer.
- (b) A player wishing to challenge the legality of an exchange 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 exchange.
- (e) The right to challenge an illegal exchange survives until an unwanted tile is returned to the bag.



## **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;
  - (ii) in order to resolve a scoring discrepancy;
  - (iii) while an overdraw rule is being enforced;
  - (iv) when a late player whose timer has been started arrives at the playing table;
  - (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 an 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 Tiles Discovered Out of the Bag**

If any tiles (other than those properly in a player's possession) 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 draws 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 Tiles 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 by revealing his or her unplayed tiles;
- (b) challenge the turn.

#### **5.1.3 Right to Restart Timer**

- (a) If a player has attempted to play out, and the 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 timer 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 any combination of:

- (a) passes;
- (b) exchanges; and
- (c) successful challenges.

### **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 forfeits that game.
- (b) The game margin in a game forfeited under subsection (a) is:
  - (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 (Optional Forfeiture due to Lateness) and 2.3.5 (Compulsory Forfeiture due to Lateness) 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) If a player who plays out does not neutralise the timer in accordance with Rule 5.1.2 (Actions to be Taken Upon 'Playing Out'), the opponent is taken to neutralise the timer by revealing his or her unplayed tiles.

- (c) 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), (c) and (d).
- (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.
- (d) If the Tournament Director determines that a player is unfairly refusing to correct a mistake on the result sheet, the Tournament Director may override that player's refusal and make the correction.

### **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**

Partial recounts are not acceptable. A game must either be recounted in its entirety, or not at all. 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 subsection (c) of Rule 3.5 (Keeping Score)).
- (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.

## 5.6 Tile Check

Before leaving the playing area, both players must ensure that the tiles are left on the board in a 10x10 grid or 4 5x5 grids.

## 5.7 Resigning

- (a) A player may not resign a game except in an emergency.
- (b) A resigned game is forfeited and cannot be subsequently resumed.
- (c) The margin awarded to the non-resigning player in a properly resigned game is the greater of the following:
  - (i) 50 points,
  - (ii) the non-resigning player's lead at the time of resignation plus 50 points.
- (d) If a game is resigned improperly, the Tournament Director will determine an appropriate margin, which must not be less than the margin applicable if the game had been properly resigned.



## **Part 6 – Conduct**

### **6.1 Cheating**

#### **6.1.1 Definition**

WESPA considers any deliberate bad-faith violation of the Standard Rules or the WESPA 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 (Cheating), 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 shuffling tiles persistently and noisily, manipulating the board or tiles on the board, or 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, or stating doubt as to the acceptability of a word);
- (e) excessive 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 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 subsection (c)(i) of Rule 3.1.2 (Accepting the Turn);
- (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**

- (a) The following acts are not generally considered unethical:
  - (i) 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;
  - (ii) playing quickly and thereby rendering the opponent short of time;
  - (iii) failing to check the opponent's calculation of a score (it is, however, strongly recommended that players do check this);
  - (iv) 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
  - (v) deliberately refraining from issuing a challenge because it is advantageous to so refrain.
- (b) 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.

### **6.2.4 Contents of Score Sheets**

- (a) Because certain rights and duties under these Rules depend on the contents of personal score sheets, a player may have a legitimate reason to look at the opponent's score sheet. This practice is not generally considered unethical.
- (b) Players are under no positive obligation to divulge the contents of their score sheets except in accordance with Rules 1.5.3 (Right to Examine Materials) and 5.5.3 (Surrender of Score Sheet). However, to avoid disputes, players are encouraged to record any private material on a sheet separate to that on which they record their scores.
- (c) It is unethical to seek unfair advantage by looking at an opponent's score sheet.

### **6.2.5 Determination of State of Mind**

WESPA recognises that in most cases, regarding an act as unethical requires a posterior 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. Subject to Rule 6.5 (Right of Appeal), the Tournament Director is the first and final arbiter of all such questions.

### **6.2.6 Action to be Taken in Case of Unethical Behaviour**

- (a) A player who believes that an opponent is acting or has acted 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) reduction of margin in the tournament standings;
  - (iii) loss of turn, loss of time or point penalty in the game in progress;
  - (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 unnecessarily 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; or
- (f) conducting lengthy or loud post-game analyses with 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 6.2.6 (Action to be Taken in Case of Unethical Behaviour) for examples of such penalties).

#### **6.3.4 Observing Games**

- (a) Persons observing a game must not:
  - (i) distract the players;
  - (ii) discuss the game audibly;
  - (iii) do anything that might conceivably pass information about the game to the players;
  - (iv) infringe the personal space of the players; or
  - (v) continue to observe, if asked to leave by a player or the Tournament Director.
- (b) The Tournament Director has general discretion to remedy and prevent breaches of observational etiquette. This may include the imposition of penalties.
- (c) Some tournament games are officially annotated. All annotation arrangements, including the capacity of players to refuse annotation, are matters for the tournament organisers, the Tournament Director and the players concerned.

#### **6.4 Tournament Director's Powers and Responsibilities**

- (a) In disputes concerning players' conduct, the Tournament Director's finding binds the players.
- (b) In resolving such disputes, the Tournament Director is entitled to take the smooth running of the tournament into consideration.
- (c) In resolving such disputes, the Tournament Director is obliged to give each player a fair hearing. This includes, where relevant, taking 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) A player whose conduct is subject to any adverse ruling or finding has no right of appeal during the course of the tournament. However, the player may appeal to the WESPA Executive Committee to review the ruling or finding after the tournament has concluded.
- (b) The WESPA Executive Committee will form a committee of disinterested players to consider any appeal made under subsection (a). The appeal will be considered and determined either in person or through written submissions, by letter, fax or email.

- (c) The committee so formed is the sole body with power to review the correctness of the Tournament Director's actions.
- (d) If the appeal is upheld in whole or in part, the committee will recommend a course of action to the WESPA Executive Committee. This may include the amendment of tournament results.
- (e) There is no further right of appeal.



## **Appendix 1 – Standard Rules**

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Note: In the event of a discrepancy between the Standard Rules and the WESPA Game Rules, the WESPA Game Rules prevail. See Rule 1.1 (Standard Rules).

### HOW TO PLAY

#### EVERY WORD COUNTS!

SCRABBLE® is a word game for 2, 3 or 4 players. Play consists of forming interlocking words, crossword fashion, on the SCRABBLE® playing board, using letter tiles with various score values. The object of the game is to get the highest score. Each player competes by using their tiles in combinations and locations that take best advantage of letter values and premium squares on the board. The combined total score for a game may range from about 400 points to 800 or more, depending on the skill of the players.

### CONTENTS

1 Playing Board

100 Letter Tiles

4 Tile Racks

1 Tile Bag

#### 100 Letter tiles:

- There are 98 tiles with letters of the alphabet and two blank tiles.
- Each of the letter tiles has score values indicated by the number to the bottom right of the letter.

- The two blank tiles have no score value, and can be used as any letter desired. When it is played, the player must state what letter it represents, after which it cannot be changed for the remainder of the game.

## SET UP

- Get a pen and paper to keep score.
- Set up the board in the middle of the playing area.
- Each player takes a rack for arranging their tiles and places it in front of them.
- All the tiles are placed in the tile bag. Each player takes a tile out to find out who plays first. The player who has the tile nearest the beginning of the alphabet, with the blank preceding 'A,' plays first. The exposed tiles are put back into the bag and the bag is shaken to shuffle them.
- Each player, in turn, then draws seven new tiles and places them on their racks. Everyone is now ready to play SCRABBLE®. Play proceeds clockwise.

## RULES OF PLAY

### Keeping score

One player is elected as scorekeeper. They keep tally of each player's score after each turn.

### Exchanging tiles

Any player may use their turn to replace any or all of the tiles in their rack. They may do so by discarding them face down, drawing the same number of new tiles, then mixing the discarded tiles with those remaining in the bag. They then await their next turn to play.

### Passing (missing a turn)

Instead of placing tiles on the board, or exchanging tiles, a player may also decide to pass, whether or not they are able to make a word (or words).

However, should all players pass twice in succession, the game ends.

### Placing the first word

The first player combines two or more of their tiles to form a word and places them on the board to read either across or down with one tile on the centre square (ribbon). Diagonal words are not permitted.

All tiles played in this and subsequent turns must be placed in one continuous line horizontally or vertically.

### Permitted words

You may play any words listed in a standard English dictionary except those only spelt with an initial capital letter, abbreviations, prefixes and suffixes and words requiring apostrophes and hyphens. Foreign words in a standard English dictionary are considered to have been absorbed into the English language and are allowed. Prior to starting the game, all players must agree on a dictionary to be used.

Once a tile has been placed on the board, it may not be moved unless the word is successfully challenged.

### Challenging words

Once a word has been played, the word may be challenged before the score is added up and the next player starts their turn. At this point only, you may consult a dictionary to check spelling or usage. If the word challenged is unacceptable, the player takes back their tiles and loses their turn.

### BOARD Premium Spaces

The playing board consists of 15 x 15 squares in the playing area with grid lines to separate the squares. There are special premium squares on the board with bonus score values:

#### Premium Letter Squares

A light blue square doubles the score of a letter placed on it.

A dark blue square triples the score of a letter placed on it.

#### Premium Word Squares

A light red square doubles the score of the word.

A dark red square triples the score of the word.

If a word crosses both premium letter and word squares, all the bonus letter values are added up before the complete word score is double or tripled.

The bonus scores of the premium squares only apply to the turn in which the tiles are placed on them.

When a blank is placed on a Triple or Double Word square, the sum of the tiles in the word is doubled or tripled even though the blank itself has no score value. When it is placed on a Triple or Double Letter square, the value of the blank tile is still zero.

### Scoring the first word

A player completes their turn by counting and announcing their score, which is recorded by the scorekeeper.

The score for the turn is calculated by adding up all the values of the numbers on the tiles, plus any premium values from utilising the premium squares.

#### Ending a turn

At the end of every turn, the player draws as many new tiles as they have played, thus always keeping seven tiles in their rack.

#### Added 50-point bonus

Any player who plays all seven of their tiles in a single turn scores a premium of 50 points in addition to their regular score for the turn. The 50 points are added on after doubling or tripling a word score.

#### Next Player's turn

The second player and then each player in turn, has the choice of exchanging tiles, passing or adding one or more tiles to those already played so as to form new words of two or more letters.

All tiles played in any one turn must be placed in one row only across or one column only down the board.

If they touch other tiles in adjacent rows, they must form complete words crossword fashion, with all such tiles.

The player gets full score for all words formed or modified by their play. Include the bonus scores of any premium squares on which they have placed the tiles.

There are five different ways that new words can be formed:

1. Adding one or more tiles to the beginning or end of a word already on the board, or to both the beginning and end of that word.
2. Placing a word at right angles to a word already on the board. The new word must use one of the letters of the word already on the board.
3. Placing a complete word parallel to a word already played so that adjoining tiles also form complete words. In this example, more than one word is formed in the same turn and each word is scored. The common letters are counted (with full premium value, when they are on premium squares) in the score for each word.
4. The new word may also add a letter to an existing word.
5. The last variation would be to "bridge" two or more letters. (This can only happen on the 4th move or later in the game.)

Sometimes a word may cross two premium word squares. The word score is doubled then re-doubled - 4 times the complete word score; or tripled and then

re-tripled - 9 times the complete word score!

End of the game

The game ends when

- all the tiles have been drawn and one of the players has used all the tiles in their rack
- when all possible plays have been made
- all players have passed twice in consecutive turns

After all the scores are added up, each player's score is reduced by the sum of his unplayed tiles, and if one player has used all their tiles, their score is increased by the sum of the unplayed tiles of all the other players.

e.g. If Player one has an X and an A left on their rack at the end of the game, their score is reduced by 9 points. The player who used all their tiles adds 9 points to their score.

Remember - the game can be won or lost on the last letter in the bag!

## RULES CLARIFICATIONS

- If any tile touches another tile in adjacent rows, it must form part of a complete word crossword fashion, with all such tiles.
- The same word can be played more than once in a game.
- Pluralised words are allowed.
- A word can be extended on both ends within the same move e.g. TRAINER to STRAINERS.
- All tiles played in any one turn must be placed in one continuous line only, horizontally or vertically.
- Players may not add tiles to various words, or form new words in different parts of the board in the same turn.
- The bonus scores of the premium squares only apply to the turn in which the tiles are placed on them.
- When more than one word is formed in a single turn, each word is scored. The common letters are counted (with full premium value, when they are on premium squares) in the score for each word.
- If a word crosses two premium word squares, the word score is doubled and re-doubled - 4 times the complete word score; or tripled and re-tripled - 9 times the complete word score.
- When a blank is placed on a Triple or Double Word square, the sum of the tiles in the word is doubled or tripled even though the blank itself has no score value. When it is placed on a Triple or Double Letter square, the value of the blank tile is still zero.
- When one player has used all their tiles and the tile bag is empty, the game is over. In some games, no player succeeds in using all their tiles.

In this case the game continues until all possible moves have been made. If a player is unable to move, they pass their turn. If all players pass twice, in consecutive turns, the game ends.

- A dictionary or word guide may not be used while a game is in progress to search for words to fit the tiles on your rack. It may only be consulted after a word has been played and challenged.

## **Appendix 2 – Official Word Source**

The official word source is the HarperCollins SCRABBLE® Tournament & Club Word List (2007 edition).

