

WESPA Rules Version 3 - Summary of Changes

Preamble

Version 3 of the WESPA rules includes numerous additions and improvements. These range from bringing procedures up to date with current technology to making certain rules much easier to understand.

Broad Improvements

There are more internal references for where there is overlap between certain rules.

Rules that many people were having difficulty with have been simplified.

As far as possible, paragraphs have not been split over two pages in order to aid with the reading and comprehension of each rule.

Each part of Rules Version 3 starts on a new page.

Specific Changes and Additions

- 1.4.2 Precedence of Timers - has been updated to allow the use of smart device timers and has additional criteria to aid in establishing the precedence of timers.
- 1.4.6 Malfunction of Timers - a rule to cover this has been added.
- 1.6 Use of Electronic and Other Devices During Play - this was added to legislate the use of calculators (both electronic and not), music players, tablets, smart phones, phablets, smart watches, and tech which is not commonly in use yet such as Google Glass and other augmented reality devices. Mention is also made that devices must be set so that they cannot distract other players.
- 2.3.6 - the margins given for games forfeited due to lateness are no longer smaller than the minimum margin awarded for forfeiture due to going over time (after all, the person who goes over time has at least bothered to show up for the game).
- 2.4 Shuffling - distracting practices such as overly noisy shuffling and 'bag slamming' while shuffling, which have always been unacceptable according to rule 6.3.1 (b), are now also mentioned in Rule 2.4.
- 2.5 Disabilities - the TD is given broader scope to aid players with special needs, including now the ability to award a discretionary amount of extra playing time.
- 3.1.2 now explains what to do if one player wants to check scores but the other player hasn't recorded scores since the bag emptied.
- 3.1.3 Establishing Orientation - this has been reworked to make it easier to understand, and to allow the non-erring player to correct this type of error without losing time.
- 3.6.3 Right to the Bag - this was added so that players will not lose time in the end game when they urgently need the bag to count tiles but the opponent is busy drawing tiles or counting tiles themselves.
- 3.7.2 Right to Object to Opponent Shuffling Tiles - this has been qualified such that a player may object only with a legitimate reason.

- 3.8 Declaring a Blank - this has been extensively rewritten to promote the practice of circling a printed letter in order to avoid confusion regarding the designation of a blank. A significant change is that you may restart your opponent's clock immediately if the opponent fails to designate the blank on his or her own time.
- 3.9.5 Overdrawing - the order of the paragraphs has been reversed, since an overdraw is more likely to be noticed before a replacement tile has been placed on the rack. While the previous rule was confusing to a number of people in the case where there are only two newly drawn tiles in the overdraw, it now clearly specifies what to do in this case.
- 3.9.9 Drawing out of Order - the order of the paragraphs is now reversed to aid comprehension, and the procedure for managing an out of order draw has been changed to maintain the correct order of tile drawing.
- 3.10.6 Courtesy Draw - the one minute courtesy draw period has been shortened to thirty seconds. (Interestingly, for those of you who are not aware of it, this courtesy draw period is now only 15 seconds in North America).
- 3.10.3 Issuing and Adjudicating a Challenge - this section was by and large out of date, out of order and fragmented. All content related to this has been added in a new section called 3.11 (Procedures for issuing and adjudicating a challenge).
- 3.10.7 Amount of Time Allowed to Challenge When a Player Has Played Out - was added in response to a number of queries about this.
- 3.10.8 No Retraction or Concession of a Challenge - updated for self-lookup challenging.
- 3.10.13 Challenge Penalties - these have been re-ordered to largely reflect international use, and it is now mentioned that the "5 points per word penalty" is the preferred international norm.
- 3.10.15 Improper Tile Exchanges - this was added to cover most aspects of illegal tile exchanges, and specifically an exchange when there are less than 7 tiles in the bag. It's adapted from the NASPA rules, but is structured and presented in a way that should be much easier to understand.
- 3.11 Procedures for Issuing and Adjudicating a Challenge - this addition puts all relevant information regarding adjudication together and in the correct order (namely mentioning self-lookup first and the antiquated practice of using runners further down). One of the most exciting and practical additions here is that the use of smart devices for adjudication at the playing table is now allowed.
- 3.12 Correcting Errors of Misoriented or Imperfectly Placed Tiles - this was added to manage these common problems.
- 4.4 Spilled Tiles - this has been extensively rewritten to manage every spillage of tiles according to whether the spillage was related to drawing of tiles or not. The rule has been worded in such a way as to prevent a player who spills a tile or tiles just after filling his or her rack from potentially benefitting from the spillage, as happened in a WSC game in 2011.
- 4.6 Tiles Noticed to be Missing During Play - this was added following an incident at one of the WSCs.
- 4.7 Scope of Uninvited Intervention by the Director in a Game - spells out when the TD may or may not intervene in a game.
- 4.8 Scope of Uninvited Intervention by a Third Party in a Game - spells out when a third party may or may not intervene in a game.
- 4.9 Emergencies and Medical/Health Problems - the wording of this heading was designed so that any TD doing a search of the rules would be able to find this paragraph easily. This addition aids the TD with guidelines for emergencies.
- 5.1.4 Tiles Remaining - now mentions that doubling the value of the tiles left on the opponent's rack and adding that number to the score of the player who played out is officially the procedure recommended by WESPA (which will hopefully establish an international norm in the future).

- 5.3.3 Overtime Leading to Forfeiture - it was clear that the previous version of this rule, though succinct, was very confusing to a large number of players (as evidenced by a lively facebook discussion of the topic). The main problem that people had was the issue of the score to be recorded for the forfeiter. This rule has been purposely rewritten in an exaggeratedly simple way in order to virtually rule out any confusion.
- 5.4.1 Result Slips Final Once Signed - in order to prevent injustice, one player may petition the TD to correct ONLY an error where the winner and loser's scores have been accidentally reversed on a result slip that has been handed in.
- 5.6 Tile Check - now mentions that four grids of 5x5 are preferable to one grid of 10x10, which will help to prevent the all-too-common error of players accidentally forming a grid of 11x9 and then wondering where the "extra" tile should go.
- 6.2.4 Penalties for Abuse - these are now graded at the discretion of the TD to prevent a player from being ejected from a tournament for the slightest or mildest form of insult or abuse.
- 6.5 Right of Appeal - this rule now includes a hierarchy of channels that players must first follow before approaching the WESPA Executive Committee.
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The WESPA Rules Committee 2015 comprises:

- Trevor Hovelmeier (South Africa) - Chair
- Jessica Pratesi (UK)
- Evan Cohen (Israel)
- Dave Wiegand (USA)
- John Hamilton (Australia)

My sincere thanks to all team members for their invaluable contributions and also to the WESPA Executive Committee members for their constructive input during the process.

Regards,

Trevor Hovelmeier