



RULES OF ONLINE TOURNAMENT PLAY

PREAMBLE: The following rules apply to tournaments run with an officially licensed app on a device (eg tablet, phone, PC). The rules may be varied for particular tournaments, but any variations must be announced in advance so that they may be known by players before registering for the tournament, except in the case of an emergency. All decisions of the Tournament Director (TD) on disputes or clarification of rules are final. Where these rules vary from those published from time to time in Scrabble sets by copyright holders, these rules will apply.

As of July 2022, the platforms accepted for rated online play are the Scrabble Go app (available on PC, phone, and tablet), and PlayScrabble (run by Scopely via the link playscrabble.com). Games are set at 45 minutes duration where no clocks are available. If a game is not commenced within 25 minutes, for whatever reason, a drawn non-game is awarded to the players.

Timed games have a 15 min timeframe per player, with 5 minutes allowed for overtime.

STARTING THE GAME

1.1 The pre-tournament information should specify how the first player in each game will be decided. This may be by drawing tiles, use of a computer program, use of a "balanced start" record card, or another method as determined by the tournament organiser.

1.2 Balanced starts: a method is used to determine who shall start each game, with the objective being for players to have roughly the same number of starts. When a record card is used, the player who has had fewer starts plays first. If both players have had an equal number of starts, tiles are drawn to see who plays first.

1.3 When the first player is presented with their rack, the time clock starts. This player may be required to pass if they have been incorrectly allocated the start.

TIME

2.1 The time allotted should be equally divided between the two players. Where this is not technically possible, players should be mindful of jointly not exceeding the total game time.

2.2 If one or both players is not ready to start on time, the TD may reduce the time allotted for the game. A late player may be required to run down their clock for a specified number of minutes before starting play.

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2.3 A player who is not ready to start before half the total game time has expired may be required to forfeit that game.

SCORING and TILE-TRACKING.

3.1 Scoring and tile-tracking are maintained by the app.

MAKING YOUR MOVE

4.1 You must, in this order:

- a. place the tiles on the board.
- b. submit the move.
- c. consider that, if your opponent challenges, your new rack may change.

Your turn is over when you have submitted your move.

4.2 Where a player becomes disconnected from the game, reconnection should be attempted promptly.

4.3 If a player must leave mid-game for emergency/health reasons, the TD should be made aware that this is happening. If at all possible before leaving, the player should make their move first. Their opponent may continue to consider their next move. Where play is communal, the device must remain with the TD. When the absent player returns, the game continues.

CHANGING

5.1 You may change tiles as many times as you wish during a game, as long as there are at least seven tiles in the bag.

PASSING

6.1 You may pass (i.e. miss a turn without changing tiles) during a game. A pass scores zero.

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CHALLENGING

7.1 Where technically possible, you may challenge a word or words, word placement, or the legality of an exchange.

7.2 If the move is allowed, play continues with no penalty to the challenger (except when a specific penalty challenge system has been advertised in pre-tournament information).

7.3 You may challenge only once in a turn, but that challenge may include one or more words (if technically possible). Words challenged together receive a single decision: if all words challenged are acceptable, the move is allowed; if at least one word challenged is not acceptable, the move is disallowed.

7.4 Void Challenge (as found in Scrabble Go and PlayScrabble) is an acceptable form of online play

ENDING THE GAME

8.1 (Where challenges are possible) the replying player must either accept or challenge the final move of the player going out.

8.2 If you have used all your tiles in an accepted move and the bag is empty, the scores are altered such that you are advantaged by twice the value of the tiles on your opponent's rack. (The method will be determined by the app).

8.3 The game ends automatically if four or six (depending on the app) successive scores of zero occur, obtained from passes, successful challenges or tile exchanges. The value of the tiles on each person's rack is subtracted from their total score.

8.4 Where each player does not have a separate time clock, and end of time for play is announced, the TD may curtail any unfinished games. At that time, the game is considered concluded and the results as they stand are used.

8.5 Where each player has a separate time clock, if you go over time, you will be penalised 10 points per minute or part thereof. This penalty is deducted from your total score. The clock is not in overtime until -0:01 is shown.

8.6 Where an app awards the win to a player who is likely to have lost if the game had been face-to-face, the TD may rule on the result (e.g. the opponent is ahead but the app limits overtime).

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8.7 Where applicable, the winner must submit the results to the official scorers promptly.

PLAYERS' RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

9.1 No dictionaries, word lists, personal electronic devices or similar may be consulted during a tournament game other than those facilities allowed within the app. The official reference for adjudication at tournaments is determined within the app.

9.2 Applications officially licensed by the licensor are solely acceptable for officially rated tournament play. If there is a dispute regarding equipment, consult the TD before play commences. The TD may refuse use of unsuitable equipment. Personalised scoring or tile-tracking sheets are allowed and may be examined by the opponent before the game, if play is communal.

9.3 The onus is on each player to be familiar with the rules and to know when adjudication is required. If players are unsure of the rule which applies to a particular situation, or suspect that their opponent has violated a rule, they should consult the TD immediately for clarification, or straight after the game if the clock cannot be neutralised. The TD will attempt to determine if a deliberate act to violate the rules has occurred, or if it was a mistake. The TD may impose an appropriate ruling or suitable penalty.

9.4 Players must be courteous, and not distract opponents or other players in any way. Observers may not distract, interfere with, or influence other players. The TD may declare a game forfeit. This may occur when a player has abandoned a game, committed a flagrant breach of rules, or arrived too late to play the game.

Queries regarding rules should be firstly addressed to Nick Ivanovski, who currently looks after rated online events.

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