

## **Basic Rules of Club & Tournament SCRABBLE®**

This is only an overview of the Rules. All club and tournament players are expected to know and follow the Official Tournament Rules, as published by the North American Scrabble® Players Association (NASPA). [www.scrabbleplayers.org](http://www.scrabbleplayers.org)

### **Word Source**

Club uses the Official Tournament and Club Word List (OWL) to adjudicate challenges. This is essentially the same as the Official Scrabble® Player's Dictionary 4<sup>th</sup> Edition (OSPD4), which is available in most bookstores, except that the OWL also includes about 200 expurgated words and other corrections. *You must be a member of NSA/NASPA to purchase the OWL.*

### **Using the Clock**

Game clocks are used to allot 25 minutes of playing time to each player. While this may seem short to new players, it is usually more than enough time. Most players get used to the clock very quickly.

Clock starts when first player looks at first tile.

Neutralize clock to dispute score, call for director, during challenges, etc. Do not neutralize the clock during a "hold" or to compute your score.

Your turn does not end until you hit your clock.

### **Order of Play**

From the Official Tournament Rules, Section IV.G.1:

1. **After your opponent's last play, record the cumulative score. (May be waived if bag is empty.)**
2. **Position your tiles on the board. You may remove or reposition tiles before starting opponent's clock.**
3. **If playing a blank, designate it appropriately.**
4. **Declare the score.**
5. **Start your opponent's clock, ending your turn. If opponent's clock has already been running, the turn ends after step d.**
6. **Record your cumulative score. (May be waived if bag is empty.) You may NOT pre-record this score.**
7. **Record your play, if desired.**
8. **Draw tiles to replenish your rack.**
9. **Track tiles, if desired.**

### **Scoring**

You must keep track of your score and that of your opponent. Score sheets are provided by the Club.

### **Drawing Tiles**

Hold tile bag above eye level and avert your eyes.

Show empty palm before putting hand in bag.

Draw tiles and place face down on table or directly on rack.

### **Overdrawing**

If you have overdrawn, immediately neutralize the clock and notify your opponent.

Place your tiles face down on the table. Your opponent chooses 2+ the number of tiles overdrawn and turns them face up, then throws his/her choice of overdrawn tiles back into the bag.

It doesn't matter if you have looked at the tiles or not. If you have mixed drawn tiles with your rack, then opponent chooses from all tiles, otherwise just from newly drawn tiles.

### **Challenge & Hold:**

You can challenge an opponent's play (any or all words created) any time after s/he hits the clock and before s/he draws a tile out of the bag.

Announce "**Challenge!**", neutralize the clock, show opponent which words are being challenged. Put your tiles face down on the table and go to the Word Judge computer to adjudicate the play.

► You can give yourself more time to decide by announcing "**Hold!**" This prevents your opponent from drawing while you decide whether to challenge the play or let it go (your clock still runs while you are holding). Strongly encouraged for all players.

### **Exchanging**

Note: You are allowed to exchange only if there are at least 7 tiles left in the bag (count first, to make sure!).

1. Place tiles to be exchanged face down on the table.
2. Announce "**Exchange [# tiles]**" and hit clock.
3. Draw new tiles from bag (place new tiles face down on the table, or directly onto your rack).
4. Put old tiles back in the bag.

### **Passing**

You can choose to skip a turn by announcing "**Pass!**" and hitting your clock (usually only done near end of game).

### **Talking, Etiquette**

Club is a social event, so people talk. However, it's unethical and against the rules to talk about your plays in a misleading manner, also known as "coffeehousing". Examples of unacceptable behavior: pronouncing words out loud, saying "I'm not sure this is good" before making a play,

Tournaments are a different story—you should not speak unless you are declaring the blank, announcing your score, verifying the score, etc.

Players are expected to behave in an ethical manner and follow both the letter and spirit of the rules.

### **Director:**

If you have any questions about rules or procedure during the game, call for a Director!