



NASPA Bulletin

The monthly news bulletin of the North American SCRABBLE® Players Association

January 2010: Vol. 2, No. 1

The Numbers

by Chris Cree

There have been/are eight multiday events this month and at least 21 one-day events. Attendance is up a smidge from 2009.

Atlantic City registration is equal to last year's total a week before the event, Calgary has already surpassed theirs. Hudson, OH's info has yet to unfold. Bryan, TX did not have a multiday event last year and Dallas, TX had a limited space event that saw no change. Reno-MLK +6.5%, Minneapolis Redeye +19%, Toronto vs. Montreal unchanged at 23 on each side and the year's first event, Albany, NY, showed a 25% gain and Kissimmee, FL is up 34% (way to go, Annette Tedesco and Art Moore!).

This is really remarkable considering the proliferation of one-day events. One-day-ers are allowing those who would not normally travel to get their rated tournament experience. For some this past year, those were all that were doable.

There are signs of an improving economy. The stock market is up 75% from its nadir in March 2009 though still far below its high of April 2008. Until the jobless rate is below the psychological mark of 10%, consumer spending (or in NASPA terms, travelling to tournaments) will stay in a veritable holding pattern. And, even when this does happen, typically there is a post-recession caution. I believe that this post-recession's caution will be greater than any I have seen and will last a solid 18 months.

Still, there are positive signs and one truth is there, our players want to play.

My intent for 2010 is to get out there as much as I possibly can to meet and see our players. I plan to attend events in cities that I have either never been or have not been in a while in addition to my "normal" schedule. I have not been to Phoenix in a few years, so off we go there. Same for Chicago and the Arden Cup.

Recently, the NASPA Tournament Committee sanctioned events in Kansas City this June and Omaha this July. I hope to be at both. I am still working on scheduling a Florida stop. Although I have been to the Smokie Mountains, I have not been able to get to the Knoxville event, nor have I been to Georgia for many years. I will try to hit some of those as well.

When Brian Cappelletto (Chicago, IL) and I talk there is always the same one interrogative in each conversation:

"So, where is your next tournament?"



Albany, clockwise from top left: the playing room; Kenji Matsumoto (Aiea, HI); Jeremy Cahnmann (Chicago, IL), John Robertson; Joel Wapnick (Montreal, QC), Annette Tedesco (Stillwater, NY), John Robertson (Cambridge, ON). Photos: Roger Cullman of www.rogercullman.com.

New Year's in Albany

by John Robertson

Another large crowd of Scrabble aficionados descended on the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Albany, NY from December 29 through January 3 for the fifth annual New Year's tourney hosted by Annette Tedesco. The event produced its usual fair share of surprises and SCRABBLE excellence.

The main event was preceded by two eight-round early birds. The December 29 affair featured 36 players vying in three groups of 12. Seven wins in eight games was enough to take first place in all three divisions. Winter's (Houston, TX) 7-1 mark was enough to give him a one-game edge over Michael Wolfberg (Westford, MA). John Morse (Delmar, NY), the only player to upend Winter, finished in third with the best spread among the 5-3 players. Brett Constantine (Florence, MA) and Tobey Roland (Baltimore, MD) were the front-runners in the second division and faced each other twice in the last two rounds. The games were split which earned Brett the divisional title with a 7-1 mark. Roland's 6-2 was good enough for second. Shelley Ubeika (Mississauga, ON) came in third — but just barely. Her 5-3, +236 was a mere 13 spread points ahead of fourth-place Mona

ALBANY WINNERS continued on p. 2

Official Rule Updates

by the Rules Committee

Full details of these and other minor changes, which take effect on February 2nd, can be found at our [website](#).

Rule I.F. (Inappropriate Conduct While Viewing Games): We noted that authorized annotators may observe games.

Rule III.A.6. (Papers): Tracking lists may not be constructed to act as memory aids.

Rule IV.F. (Playing the Blank): The blank designation rule was significantly revamped/simplified. The key features are that the written designation is mandatory and spoken designation is equivalent to no designation. The clock may only be neutralized if a written designation is unclear. If no written designation is provided, opp's clock should be restarted (not neutralized). A challenge involving a blank may be withdrawn if there is no clearly written blank designation. Director may start opp's clock in such a situation to request a written designation (after which ANY word involving the blank may be challenged, or the challenge may be withdrawn).

Rule IV.J.1.a. (Software Self-Lookup Procedure) and Rule IV.K.2. (The Manual Lookup Procedure): We noted that at any

NASPA RULES OK continued on p. 2

Albany Winners

from *NEW YEARS IN ALBANY*, p. 1

Larsen (Glenmont, NY). In the third division, Bridgett McGrew (Kington, NY) and Janet Elliott (La Jolla, CA) both roared out to 6-0 records; they too faced off twice in the last two games to settle matters. Those games were split, but McGrew took top honors with superior point spread. Sean Aery (Chapel Hill, NC), the only player in the division with a 6-2 record, came in third.

52 players entered the December 30 early bird and were slotted into four divisions. Michael Wolfberg was the class of the field in Division A. He accrued a sensational 7-1 record with a +947 spread. In second place was Darin True (Pontiac, IL) at 6-2, while Jason Keller's (Highland Park, NJ) 5-3 +474 was good enough for third place. In Division B, Michael Bassett's (Port Clinton, OH) six wins vaulted him into first place over five rivals all at 5-3. Daniel Milton (Vienna, VA) and Heather McCall (Toronto, ON) finished second and third respectively to end up in the money. Wilma Pitzer's (Englewood, OH) 6-2 record earned her first place over Denise Mahnken (Long Beach, CA) in Division C on the basis of spread points. Young Noah Lieberman (Charlotte, NC) came in third with a 5-3 mark. Dave Krook (Mississauga, ON) and Nancy Wroblewski (E. Greenbrook, NY) topped Division D with 7-1 marks with Krook taking the title by 121 spread points. Glenn Aery (Amsterdam, NY) edged Doreen Fiorelli (New York, NY) for third place by just 16 spread points.

The four-day main event began on December 31. Among the added after-hours attractions were a New Year's Eve party, a spirited evening of Fry Your Brain, and a challenging trivia contest hosted by Jeremy Cahnmann that drew 51 participants. 95 hopefuls spread over three divisions tested their endurance in the 24-round main event. The 26-player top division featured four players entering the final day's play with identical win totals. Kenji Matsumoto eventually prevailed and took home the \$1000 first prize. The genial Joe Bihlmeyer (Durham, CT) took top honors in 42-player Division B. Nancy Konipol (Astoria, NY) was clearly the best of the field in 27-player Division C.

Annette Tedesco generously provided goodie-filled Christmas stockings for all the contestants and various treats throughout the event. Allen Pengelly (Waterloo, ON) and John Robertson were the acting directors.

NSA SCRABBLE News

by John Chew

Our partner organization, the National SCRABBLE Association, has attractively redesigned its website and newsletter. The first revamped issue of our old favorite, *SCRABBLE News*, ships in February; www.scrabble-assoc.com has instructions on how to get a free sample issue if you apply before January 27th. I'm looking forward to mine!

NASPA Rules OK

from *OFFICIAL RULE UPDATES*, p. 1

time before the adjudication has been completed, the challenger may add or remove words from the list of words being challenged.

Rule IV.J.1.I. (Software Self-Lookup Procedure): We added the requirements that, after an adjudication, the clock may not be restarted until both players are seated and (in the event of an unsuccessful challenge) the drawer has seen the face of at least one replenishment tile.

Rule IV.L. (Leaving the Playing Area During a Game): A penalty very similar to the overdraw procedure was added for those situations where a player draws tiles while his/her opponent is away from the board.

Rule V.A.4. (Finding Missing Tiles Near the End of the Game): We no longer allow an end of game challenge to be rescinded when a tile is found in the bag.

Rule V.D. (Neutralizing the Clock on the Out Play): We added a statement that it is a player's responsibility to check that the bag is empty before making an "automatic" challenge of the final play of the game.

Rule V.I. (Recording the Game): We clarified that only reporting errors (as opposed to math errors or time penalty omissions) may be changed after tally sheets have been signed.

Rule V.J.3. (Forfeits and Byes): We empowered the Director to penalize players who forfeit games in an attempt to secure prizes, and we added wording referring to what, if any, penalties may be assessed for forfeiting an annotated game.

Canadian Committee

by John Robertson

Among the tasks given to the Canadian Committee (CC) was the qualifying criteria for the next Canadian National Scrabble Championship (CNSC) which will likely be held in either 2010 or 2011. The CC decided that 52 players will qualify for this prestigious event. Defending champion Adam Logan (Montreal, QC) and 47 others will qualify by peak ratings. The other four will earn their way in at two special qualifying events.

As soon as the date for the next CNSC is announced, the CC will set the dates for these qualifying events. One will be held in Western Canada and one in Eastern Canada. The top two finishers in each qualifying tourney will advance to the CNSC. Any clubs or directors willing to host a qualifying event should notify the CC once the proposed dates are announced. If more than one request to host a qualifying tourney is received in each region, the CC will select the site. Please consult the CC's [Wiki](#) page for further information about the CNSC, player eligibility, and qualifying rules.

Advisory Board Notes

by the NASPA Advisory Board

The NASPA Advisory Board (AB) convened by telephone for 90 minutes on January 18th. Here is a summary of its minutes.

The AB thanked outgoing member Mary Rhoades (Bedford, TX) for her years of service, welcomed new member Bryan Pepper (Bedford, TX) and examined his credentials.

The AB debated a disciplinary case. All players are reminded of their obligation under Rule I.G. to avoid "any action which might incur suspicion." In particular, players must draw tiles with bag above eye level and eyes averted every time or face sanction.

The AB chose the 2009 Person(s) of the Year. Following NSA tradition, the choice will be announced in the next Bulletin.

The AB okayed a new, separate rating system for sanctioned games played using the Collins (SOWPODS) lexicon. Details will be announced on the website soon.

The AB enacted as NASPA policy an agreement made among tour/cruise tournament directors that their events be separated by 90 days and not the usual two weeks.

The AB debated the issue of what to do about the occasional player who misleads a tournament director by incorrectly stating that their membership check is in the mail.

Sam Rosin (Bernardsville, NJ) had DEENNSS to Joey Mallick's (Cape Elizabeth, ME) AD-EEIP and trailed 372-361. What did he do?



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