

NASPA

Know the

Rules

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NASPA
PO BOX 12115
Dallas, TX 75225-0115

info@scrabbleplayers.org

www.scrabbleplayers.org

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Introduction

This document serves as a companion document to the [NASPA Official Tournament Rules](#), which govern NASPA-sanctioned play in clubs and tournaments in North America.

It collects into a single document the *Know the Rules* columns that have appeared in the [NASPA News](#) since 2017. These columns present scenarios that illustrate the application of the rules to specific situations that might arise during game play.

For ease of reference, the sections of this document match the corresponding section of the *NASPA Official Tournament Rules*.

The document will be updated periodically to additional scenarios and to match any changes to the rules.

Thanks go out to those who have contributed to these columns over the years – in particular, Jan Cardia, Paul Mulik, and John Robertson – and to those who have submitted situations for review.

If you have questions or suggestions about the rules, you can contact us at info@scrabbleplayers.org.

1.B Resigning

Case: Smith and Jones are paired in the final round of a tournament. Neither player is in contention for a prize, so without even starting the game, both players agree to declare the game to be a 350-350 tie so they can leave the venue early. Should the director permit this?

Ruling: No, the game must be played properly. They cannot mutually "agree to a draw" without playing the game. Furthermore, if the players choose not to play the game, it would be considered a double forfeit.

1.D Distracting Speech or Behavior

Case: Is coughing or clearing one's throat during a game considered an example of distracting speech?

Ruling: No, it is not.

Case: Miller occasionally hums and rhythmically taps his pen on the table when he plays his game. Are either of these actions considered distracting behaviors?

Ruling: Yes. As they are both unnecessary and preventable distractions, neither should be permitted.

Case: During a game, Monahan frequently talks to himself, saying things such as, "I'm asking for trouble if I make that play."

His opponent objects to these comments. Is this action considered to be distracting speech?

Ruling: Yes, such unnecessary comments can be distracting to the opponent. Furthermore, they could perhaps be construed as baiting the opponent.

Case: During a game, Davis frequently compliments his opponent, Clive, for good plays. Is this action considered to be *distracting speech*?

Ruling: Brief complimentary comments, such as "Nice play!" or "Good find!" are generally not considered distracting speech or behavior unless they become prolonged or excessive.

The intent of the rule is not to penalize good sportsmanship. However, if Clive takes issue with these comments, the Director should ask Davis to refrain from making them.

Case: Penn always counts the value of his plays out loud before announcing the score while Teller counts silently and only announces the score. Who is right?

Ruling: There is no requirement to count out loud, but it is also not against the rules to do so.

Some players find it easier to count for themselves than to try to follow along with someone else. Others prefer silence.

2.B Observing Infractions

Case: Sulu and Chekov are in the middle of their game. Scotty is playing nearby, and he happens to notice that not only does Chekov has more than seven tiles on his rack, but also that Sulu has forgotten to hit his clock after his last play.

Should Scotty point out these irregularities?

Ruling: Any player who notices a rack with more than seven tiles should point out this irregularity. However, Scotty should NOT point out that Sulu failed to hit his clock.

Case: Alexander and Aaron call the director, Ben, over to their table to adjudicate an overdraw situation near the end of the game.

Alexander carries a folder of past *Know the Rules* columns in his knapsack and thinks that the current situation has been the subject of a column.

Can he point out the column to Ben? Can James who is observing the game proffer his own folder of *Know the Rules* columns?

Ruling: As long as Ben is amenable to the idea, why not? After all, the objective should always be to get the call right.

As situations arise, rules are clarified. For the most part, that is the purpose of the *Know the Rules* column.

Case: While waiting for the next round to begin, Edgar decides to observe the game between Tom and Brian. He notices that the clock is not running. Can he tell Tom and Brian?

Ruling: Yes. While clocks are generally the responsibility of the players, an observer can notify the players if:

- The clock is not running during a game in progress
- The clock is running during a director's call or while a challenge is being adjudicated
- The clock did not respond correctly when a player pressed the button to end a play

3.A Equipment

Case: During a game at the Hooterville Hootenanny, Mr. Drucker plays a spectacular 15-letter word covering 3 TWS squares and announces a score of 973 points.

His opponent, Mr. Haney, pulls out a calculator to verify the score, but Mr. Drucker says, "Put that thing away, Haney - it's not allowed." Then Mr. Haney produces an abacus that he just happens to have in his pocket and starts to add up the score that way.

Mr. Drucker once again objects - saying that Mr. Haney must either work out the total in his head or on paper with a pen or pencil. Who is right?

Ruling: Mr. Drucker is correct. Calculators and other devices - electronic or otherwise - may not be used during a game.

Case: Lucy and Ethel are in the middle of their game at the Tropicana Have-a-Banana Cabana. Lucy realizes that her rack contains the bingo stem SATIRE plus a blank, so on a blank sheet of paper, she starts writing out all the words she knows using this stem.

Ethel calls the director over and claims that it is against the rules to consult a word list during the game. Lucy insists that she isn't breaking any rules. Who is correct?

Ruling: Lucy is correct. Blank sheets of paper are allowed, and once the game begins, there are no restrictions about what may be written on the paper.

Case: Roscoe P. Coltrane is directing the Hazzard County Hoedown.

Bo and Daisy have just finished their game, and Daisy points out that since Bo went over on time by 2 1/2 minutes, he must deduct 30 points from his score.

Bo tells Daisy, "I forgot to tell you - since I have this cast on my hand because of that fight Luke and I got into yesterday at the Boar's Nest, Director Roscoe has granted me 5 extra minutes of playing time per game. Therefore, I did not go over on time."

Is Bo in the right?

Ruling: A director may grant extra time for medical reasons, but the player granted this extra time must make the opponent aware of this fact BEFORE the game begins.

Since Bo failed to do this, he forfeits the extra time and must deduct 30 points.

Case: Linda uses a clipboard with multiple score sheets on it. At the end of each game, she places the finished score sheet on the bottom of the pile.

Glenn complains that Linda might easily lift the top few sheets and look at words played in a previous game.

Can Linda use a clipboard that holds multiple score sheets during a game?

Ruling: It is allowed if the papers are not visible. If Glenn sees Linda rifling through the pages, he can call the director.

Case: Archie and Edith are about to begin their game in the Queens Quick-draw Qualifier. When they draw tiles to determine who plays first, Edith draws a D and Archie draws a V. Then Archie looks closer at the tile and gripes, "Aww jeez, would youse look at dis. Dese tiles is pink! I ain't gonna play wit' no sissy pink tiles!"

Archie produces a different bag and says, "I wanna use dese black tiles instead." Edith says, "I'm sorry Archie, but you don't get to choose. You're supposed to play with the tiles that were here when you sat down."

Who is right?

Ruling: Archie is correct. Since he is going second, he gets choice of equipment.

Case: Game 7 of the World Series is underway at the same time as the final round of the Midway tournament. Dennis asks Julia if he can set his phone to watch the baseball game while they play Scrabble.

Julia agrees but calls over the director to check whether it is okay.

How should the director rule?

Ruling: Absolutely not.

Dennis argues unsuccessfully that he is not utilizing the phone – just watching the baseball game. Phones and other devices should not be used or viewed for any reason while a game is in progress.

3.D Who Plays First?

Case: To determine who goes first, Clark draws a B while Miller draws a G. Because Clark won the draw, he believes he has the option to go first or second based on his preference.

Ruling: Clark is incorrect. Since Clark's tile was closer to A, he must go first. Clark does not have the option of going second.

3.E Who Draws Tiles First?

Case: A tournament is using a pairing system that predetermines which player goes first. In one game Victoria is playing Marie. Victoria tells Marie, "I am going first." Marie does not verify Victoria's information.

Marie is the player who should have gone first, but Victoria went first instead. This error is discovered after the game ends. Can this be rectified?

Ruling: In every game, both players are equally responsible for verifying who goes first and for making sure they are paired against the proper opponent. In this case, Marie is at fault for not checking the schedule, so the game result stands.

However, if the Director determines that Victoria's action was not accidental, Victoria should be cited a Code of Conduct violation for unsportsmanlike conduct.

If possible, the director should attempt to reassign firsts and seconds in later games so that neither player has excessive firsts or seconds during the remainder of the tournament.

3.G Positioning Tiles

Case: In Round 2 of the Mayberry May Day Mayhem, Floyd's first play is a valid word, but it doesn't cover the center star.

Otis then plays an 8-letter word through Floyd's play, covering both the center star and a TWS (Triple Word Score) space. Otis adds up his score and multiplies it by 6.

Floyd objects, claiming that the center star can only be used by the player going first. Who is right?

Ruling: Otis is correct. If the center star is not covered on the initial play, it remains available as a DWS (Double Word Score) space for a future turn.

Case: Quincy goes first. He plays the word ULU but misses the center square. His opponent, Donnelly, allows the play to stay on the board because she can play an eight-letter bingo through the L in ULU.

Donnelly makes her play. She also informs Quincy that his score for ULU was inaccurate because he doubled his score in wrongly thinking ULU had covered the center square. Is Donnelly correct?

Ruling: Donnelly is correct. If Donnelly allows Quincy's play to stand, Quincy's score for ULU must be adjusted to reflect that it did not touch the center square, and thus it should not be doubled.

Case: Ross and Monica are playing at the Central Perk Celebrity Showdown. With the word WRASTLE already on the board, Ross plays a word that contains an R, hooking the R to WRASTLE and forming WRASTLER. Monica knows that WRASTLER is a phony, so she successfully challenges the play.

Two turns later Monica sees that she has a bingo beginning with D and plans to hook the D to WRASTLE to form WRASTLED. However, she then sees that after Ross picked up his tiles after he lost the challenge, he inadvertently left his R on the board, so now she can't play the WRASTLED hook.

They call director Phoebe over and explain. How should she rule?

Ruling: Since each player has taken a turn since the irregularity occurred, the board should not be corrected to remove the R.

4.B Tile Drawing

Case: Ben should have drawn 4 tiles and instead draws 5 tiles. He has not mixed the newly drawn tiles with those on his rack.

The tiles are placed face down on the table, and Jennifer turns over 4 tiles instead of 3 (the number of overdrawn tiles plus 1).

A director is called to sort out the situation. What should be done?

Ruling: Ben chooses 1 tile from the 4 tiles that Jennifer exposed and returns that tile to his rack – along with the tile that Jennifer did not turn over.

Ben then places the 3 remaining exposed tiles face down on the table. Jennifer chooses 2 tiles from the face down tiles and gives them to Ben to replenish his rack. The remaining face down tile – unseen – is returned to the bag.

Case: It is Polly's turn. She makes a play using 5 tiles from her rack. There are 4 tiles remaining in the bag, but Polly errs and only draws 3 tiles from the bag.

Gustav makes a play and draws the last tile from the bag. Polly then makes a subsequent play.

Only then do both players realize Polly's tile-drawing error from her previous turn. The director is summoned. What should the Director's ruling be?

Ruling: If Gustav has not yet combined the last tile with those on his rack, Gustav gives that tile to Polly.

If the tiles have been combined, Gustav chooses 1 tile from his rack and gives it to Polly. He has 1 minute to decide which tile.

Case: It is Jane's turn. She makes a play using five tiles from her rack. There are four tiles remaining in the bag, but Jane errs and only draws three tiles from the bag.

Mike completes his turn and draws the last tile from the bag and puts it on his rack with his other tiles. Before Jane makes her next play, Mike notices that Jane has fewer than seven tiles on her rack. The director is summoned. What should the Director's ruling be?

Ruling: Since Jane's error was noticed after Mike had emptied the tile bag and combined his tiles, Mike has one minute to give Jane one tile from his rack. It can be any tile he chooses.

Case: Zeke has played 6 tiles. He intends to draw 6 replacement tiles from the bag.

When Zeke pulls 6 tiles out of the bag with his hand, a 7th tile is caught on his sleeve and comes out of the bag along with the other 6 tiles. Is this an overdraw situation?

Ruling: Yes, although it was an accident, this occurrence is considered an overdraw situation because the extra tile came out of the bag as part of Zeke's tile-drawing action.

Case: It is Florence's turn. She makes a play that uses 5 tiles from her rack. There are 4 tiles remaining in the bag, but Florence errs and only draws 3 tiles from the bag. Marvin completes his turn and notices that there is still 1 tile left in the bag. The director is summoned. What should the Director's ruling be?

Ruling: Ruling: Florence's error was caught in time. She must draw the tile from the bag that she should have drawn after completing her previous play.

Case: Alice has played five tiles. She properly draws five replacement tiles from the bag without incident. When Alice returns the bag to the table, however, a sixth tile pops from the bag and lands on the table. Is this an overdraw situation?

Ruling: No, this is not an overdraw situation because the tile did not come out of the bag as the result of Alice's tile-drawing action. No penalty is applied to Alice in this situation.

The tile that popped out of the bag is simply returned to the tile bag.

- If the tile landed faceup on the table, both players should look at it before it is returned to the bag.
- If it fell facedown, it should be returned to the bag without either player seeing its face.

Case: Joni draws replacement tiles, placing them face down on the table. She was supposed to draw 4 tiles but immediately sees that she has drawn 5. She informs her opponent Graham, stops the clock, and nudges the facedown tiles closer so Graham can reach them more easily.

While Joni is nudging the 5 tiles, one overturns and both players see that it's a blank. Should the exposed tile be automatically selected or turned back over and mixed in with the other 4 tiles?

Ruling: Turning over one or more tiles should have no impact on which tiles Graham should choose. Joni is just giving more information to Graham.

Joni should place all 5 tiles facedown and mix them. Graham will then turn over 3 tiles and return one of those tiles to the bag.

Case: Ann challenges a word played by Donald and wins the challenge. When Donald returns his tiles to his rack, he realizes that he is short one tile because he had forgotten to replace one tile after his previous turn.

Is the challenge now voided and will Donald get to take his turn again?

Ruling: There are no corrections of any type when a player makes a play from a rack with too few tiles.

Donald should now replenish his rack to contain the correct number of tiles.

Case: Robin challenges a bingo played by Marian. The play is valid, and both players return to the table.

Marian chooses to catch up on tile tracking before seeing a new tile.

Must Robin continue to wait to start Marian's clock until she has seen a tile?

Ruling: Robin can start Marian's clock immediately because she is delaying the process of resuming play.

Note that recording the cumulative score and/or play before drawing replenishment tiles is not a delay of game.

Case: Midway through a game, Rebecca makes a play but forgets to draw replacement tiles. Her opponent, Sally, then makes a play and draws replacement tiles.

Rebecca realizes that she forgot to draw tiles and calls the director over to protest the fact that Sally had drawn tiles before her.

How does the director rule?

Ruling: There is no penalty or corrective procedure as long as there are at least 7 tiles in the bag.

Rebecca should draw replacement tiles now that she realizes she failed to do so earlier.

4.E Passing and Exchanging

Case: During a game at the Shotz Shootout, Laverne has 6 vowels and a blank, so she decides to exchange 6 tiles and keep only the blank. She announces, "I exchange 7 tiles," puts the 6 vowels face down on the table, and hits the clock.

Her opponent Shirley says, "You said you were exchanging 7 tiles, so you have to throw that last tile back too." Is she right?

Ruling: No. If the opponent's clock has been started and the number of tiles placed face down differs from the number of tiles announced, only the tiles placed face down on the table should be exchanged.

Case: It is Sandra's turn. She tells her opponent, "I'm passing!" and hits the clock. She then takes all seven tiles from her rack and attempts to exchange them. Should this be allowed?

Ruling: No. Sandra announced that she was passing her turn - not exchanging tiles. She scores zero for the play and must keep her seven tiles.

Case: It is Dana's turn. She tells her opponent, "I'm exchanging all seven of my tiles!" She absentmindedly puts the seven tiles in the bag before she has drawn her seven new tiles. One of the tiles Dana draws is the Q - a tile she was intending to exchange. Does she get to draw a different tile from the tile bag?

Ruling: No. Although there is no penalty for wrongly putting exchanged tiles into the bag before drawing new tiles, if the player does this, the player assumes the risk of drawing one of the tiles that was to be exchanged.

This is what happened to Dana in this case. Accordingly, she must keep the Q as one of her replenishment tiles.

Case: Petra wants to exchange six of her tiles. She takes six tiles from her rack, places them facedown on the table, says "I'm exchanging six tiles," and starts her opponent's clock.

Before she begins drawing six tiles from the bag, Petra realizes that the lone tile on her rack was one she had intended to exchange. She calls the director and asks if she can switch one of the tiles she put facedown with the tile on her rack before she makes her exchange. What should the director's ruling be?

Ruling: The director should rule against Petra's request. As soon as Petra started her opponent's clock, her turn ended. The tiles she had placed face down are the tiles she must exchange.

Case: Daffy and Bugs are in the middle of their game. Daffy says "exchange," hits his clock, and then puts all seven of his tiles facedown on the table and reaches for the tile bag.

Bugs says, "You didn't say how many tiles you wanted to exchange so now you can't exchange. You must pass your turn." Is Bugs right?

Ruling: Yes. Although Daffy said "exchange," he did not put any tiles on the table or specify a number of tiles before he started Bugs' clock. His turn, therefore, counts as a pass.

Case: Ralph and Potsie are playing in the Big Al's Championship, and on Potsie's first turn, he exchanges 3 tiles. The game goes on, and a few turns later, Ralph points out that the 3 tiles Potsie meant to exchange on his first play are still sitting facedown on the table.

Potsie says, "Whoops, my mistake! I'll throw them back into the tile bag." Ralph says, "You can't just throw those back. I should get to see them first."

Potsie says, "Sit on it, Ralph! You didn't have the right to see them when I put them facedown, so you don't get to see them now either."

Who is right?

Ruling: Ralph is correct.

Since Potsie failed to put the tiles back into the bag at the time of the exchange and tiles have subsequently been drawn, both players should see the tiles before they go back into the bag.

4.F Playing the Blank

Case: At a tournament where blank-designation slips have the alphabet printed on them (and the player only needs to circle his/her letters of choice), Gwen has a habit of using unnecessarily broad circles that encompass more than one letter, thus making her blank designations vague.

A director is summoned by Gwen's opponent. What should the director do?

Ruling: Players must exercise reasonable care when circling a letter (or letters) from the alphabet on a blank-designation slip.

The director should inform Gwen that continued carelessness can be construed as a violation of the Code of Conduct as unsportsmanlike conduct.

Case: It is Steve's turn. He wants to play the word LAGOONS - using a blank for the N. However, Steve carelessly turns the blank designation slip 90 degrees from its

proper orientation. He ends up printing the N sideways on the slip, making the letter look exactly like a Z. Steve announces his score and hits the clock.

Marnie, his opponent, wants to challenge the word LAGOOZS. Steve argues that his blank was clearly meant to be designated as an N and his "sideways printing" on the slip ought to be irrelevant. How should the Director rule in this case?

Ruling: Players must exercise reasonable care when printing a letter (or letters) on a blank designation slip. Steve's designation, based on the slip's orientation, clearly appears to be a Z and would be read that way by his opponent or by a Director.

Accordingly, the Director should rule that Steve has designated the blank as a Z instead of an N, thus making the word LAGOOZS - which could be challenged off the board by Marnie.

Case: William plays the word PRO?I?E using two blanks. He intends the word to be PROMISE. However, on the blank-designation slip, he carelessly prints the S on the line that states "Blank #1" and the M on the line that states "Blank #2". William announces his score and hits the clock.

William's opponent, Cheryl, challenges the word PROSIME. William says it is obvious he meant the word to be PROMISE and his incorrect ordering of the blanks on the designation slip should not matter.

A Director is summoned. What should the ruling be?

Ruling: Players must exercise reasonable care when designating two blanks on a single play, making sure they appear in the proper order on the designation slip. William did not do this.

The ruling should be that William played the word PROSIME—not PROMISE—which Cheryl can challenge off the board.

Case: Veronica plays the word SPOO?ED, printing a K on the blank-designation slip. She carelessly places the blank-designation slip under the clock so that it is not easily visible to either player.

Later in the game, Veronica's opponent, Alfred, plays a word through the blank - believing it to be an L. Veronica challenges Alfred's play, writing the word on the challenge slip with a K instead of an L. This surprises Alfred. When Alfred pulls the slip from under the clock, it shows the blank had been recorded as a K.

Alfred insists that Veronica verbally declared the blank to be an L and suspects Veronica may have been deceitful in declaring the blank to be an L, printing a K on the slip, and then "concealing" it under the clock.

A Director is summoned. What should the ruling be?

Ruling: Whenever a player makes a word using a blank (or blanks) already on the board, it is up to that player to consult the blank-designation slip to verify the designation of that blank (or blanks).

Although the slip was “hidden” in this case, Alfred is still at fault for failing to verify how Veronica had designated the blank earlier in the game. However, the Director should warn Veronica about placing the slip somewhere where it could not be read easily.

If it is determined there was chicanery on Veronica’s part, the Director should rule that Veronica violated the Code of Conduct for unsportsmanlike conduct.

Case: Bo plays MERINO? - verbally designating S but circling R on the slip - and starts the Jude's clock.

Jude, not hearing the verbal designation, looks at both the slip and the play and asks, "That's an R?"

Bo says, "No, it's an S" and changes the designation to an S.

Does Jude’s asking "That's an R?" indicate that he was seeking clarification, and, therefore, allowing Bo to correct the designation?

Ruling: No, it does not. The verbal announcement is not relevant or even required. Intent is also not relevant. Only the written designation can be considered.

Once the designation is made and the opponent's clock is started, that designation cannot be changed. Jude has the right to challenge the word based on the original designation.

4.G Completing a Turn

Case: Penny has been granted an [accommodation](#) to have a scribe help her to keep score. Her scribe, Julian, asks the director if he can track tiles played on behalf of Penny.

What should the director advise Julian?

Ruling: Absolutely not. Julian’s sole responsibility is to assist Penny with the required aspects of the game, such as:

- Record the scores
- Record the blank

- Write out challenge slips

Penny should always confirm the written score and cumulative score.

Penny can direct Julian which tiles to track, if desired, but Julian should not do so on his own.

4.1 Holding and Challenging

Case: Harriet makes her play. Her opponent Ozzie says "Challenge!" and without stopping the clock, picks up a challenge slip.

He doesn't write anything on the slip and then says, "I changed my mind - I don't want to challenge."

Harriet insists that the challenge is binding. Who is right?

Ruling: Since the clock was not stopped and no words were written on the challenge slip, Ozzie is free to withdraw his challenge.

Had Ozzie written a word on the slip and/or stopped the clock, then the challenge would have been binding.

Case: With the word PULI on the board, Fred G. Sanford plays the word JUNKMAN, hooking the K to make PULIK. His opponent Lamont calls "Challenge!," pauses the clock, and writes the word JUNKMAN on a challenge slip. Both players make their way to the challenge computer.

Lamont types in the word JUNKMAN, but before Fred presses the Judge key, Lamont announces that he also wants to challenge the word PULIK.

Fred says, "You can't challenge two words, you big dummy! You only wrote one word on the challenge slip." What's the correct ruling?

Ruling: Since the Judge key has not yet been pressed, Lamont is free to add or remove any number of words from the challenge slip.

Case: Bianca makes the play PO. Mariah hooks a G to PO to make GLITTER. Dazzled for a moment, Bianca accepts the play and does not challenge POG.

Later, Mariah extends GLITTER to AGLITTER. Bianca then challenges both AGLITTER and POG. Is this challenge valid?

Ruling: No. Bianca can only challenge words formed during the current play. Because POG was already formed and not changed by the addition of the A to GLITTER, Bianca cannot challenge it.

If, however, Mariah adds an S to POG to make STAR, POGS can be challenged even if POG was not challenged earlier.

Case: Bonnie made a play that formed two words. Her opponent, Jackson, challenged, the clock was stopped, and both walked over to the computer. Unfortunately, no one wrote down the challenged word or words.

Jackson opponent typed in only one of the words, and it came back as correct. Bonnie and Jackson walked back to the board. Jackson looked at the board and said he had meant to challenge the other word.

Can Jackson redo the challenge?

Ruling: No. Bonnie won the challenge and Jackson loses a turn.

It was Jackson's responsibility to write down the words being challenged. Words can be added up until the time the play is adjudicated.

Once the adjudication process is over, there are no redos unless a word was entered incorrectly. Because the word entered was a word that had been played, and there was no written indication that Jackson wanted to challenge more words, there is no reason to redo the challenge.

Case: Selena used a blank to make a play and designated the blank by circling T on the designation sheet.

Robin later used a blank to make a play and designated the blank by circling R on the designation sheet.

Several plays later, Selena made a play that used the blank designated as an R. Robin challenged, writing the challenged word with the blank as a T. Selena pointed out that the blank is an R.

Does the challenge stand?

Ruling: Yes. As long as the blanks were properly designated, it is up to the challenger to read the slip correctly. Once a challenge is declared and the clock is stopped, it is final.

Robin must challenge the word that Selena actually played – with the blank representing an R.

Case: Vanessa made her play. She did not empty her rack, but the bag was empty. After 1 to 2 minutes, Lynn challenged Vanessa's play. Lynn's timer was running until she challenged. Vanessa contended that Lynn's challenge came too late, and she was under the impression that Lynn had accepted the play. Who is correct?

Ruling: Lynn is correct.

A challenge can be initiated until a replacement tile has been drawn. The reason to say "Hold" is to keep the opponent from drawing or to put the opponent on notice so that courtesy tiles may eventually be drawn.

Since there are no tiles to be drawn, there is no time limit for a challenge to be made.

4.J Adjudicating Challenges by Computer

Case: Ben plays the bingo GOODWILL through an open W. Matt challenges the play unsuccessfully. When does Matt restart Ben's clock?

Ruling: Matt can start the clock as soon as Ben sees the first new tile.

If tiles are placed facedown first, it is not until Ben sees the face of a new tile - just like the start of the game.

If Ben still had unplayed tiles (not a bingo), those tiles are reracked first - and then the clock is started when Ben sees the first new tile.

5.B Six-Zero Rule

Case: Grant is playing Percy. There have been 4 consecutive turns with scores of 0. Percy passes his turn for the 5th 0 score in a row. As part of his turn, Percy hits his clock and starts Grant's clock. Percy's clock now reads 0:00.

Grant also passes his turn. He hits his clock and thereby starts Percy's clock. Percy's clock runs for 2 seconds - putting him 2 seconds overtime - before he neutralizes it and says the game is over on the Six-Zero rule.

Percy thinks the overtime penalty should not be applied to him because his clock read 0:00 when Grant passed his turn for the 6th 0 score.

A director is called. What should the director's ruling be?

Ruling: Either player may end a game on the Six-Zero rule, but it is up to the player that does so to neutralize the clock.

Because Grant, in effect, did not want to invoke the Six-Zero rule, he stopped his clock and activated Percy's clock when he (Grant) passed his turn - which he is permitted to do.

The game ended at the point when Percy asked for the game to end and neutralized the clock. By that time, however, Percy was two seconds beyond his 25 minutes. Accordingly, the overtime penalty of 10 points should be applied to Percy's score.

Case: Jan and Dean are playing a Scrabble game. Jan has a Q and a V left on his rack while Dean has a C and a J left on his rack. Neither of them can play a turn. They've passed 3 times each and end the game.

What happens to the tiles and their values?

Ruling: Each player's score is reduced by the value of the unplayed tiles on their rack.

Therefore, Jan deducts 14 points ($Q=10 + V=4$), and Dean deducts 11 points ($C=3 + J=8$) from their respective scores.

Case: A game between Edmund and Gloria has reached the point where they both have nothing but unplayable tiles on their racks. Neither player is aware of the 6-zero rule. Many more than 6 consecutive zero scores occur.

Eventually Edmund plays a phony word for 3 points that goes unchallenged. Both players continue to have numerous zero scores. They finally summon a Director to ask what to do.

The Director explains that the game could have ended after the first 6 zero plays. They ask if Edmund's play - which came well after the 6th zero play - should be allowed to stand. What should the ruling be?

Ruling: When players do not invoke the 6-zero rule, the game is still in progress, and any scoring plays count. Thus, Edmund's 3-point play counts in the score.

Case: A game between Mildred and Norma has had more than six consecutive zero plays. Both Mildred and Norma are tournament newcomers and unaware of the six-zero rule.

Norma asks Fred, a player at a nearby game, what they should do. Fred tells them to invoke the six-zero rule. Is this correct?

Ruling: No. Since no one except the players in the game should influence whether or not the six-zero rule will be enforced, Fred should have kept quiet, said, "I'm afraid I'm not allowed to answer that question," or advised them to summon a Director.

The Director may penalize Fred with a Code of Conduct violation for wrongly interfering with another game.

Case: A game between Gladys and Felix has just had its sixth consecutive play with a zero score. Felix invokes the six-zero rule.

One of the six plays was an exchange; the other five were plays where phonies were challenged off the board.

Gladys believes that exchanges don't apply to the six-zero rule. Felix disagrees. A Director is summoned. What should the ruling be?

Ruling: The six-zero rule applies to any situation in which six consecutive zero scores occur regardless of how they were obtained. They can be from any combination of successful challenges, passes, or exchanges.

Therefore, Gladys is incorrect. Felix was within his rights to invoke the six-zero rule when he did.

5.D Forced Overtime

Case: Noel and Antonio are playing in the Nantucket Rustbucket Chuck-it. Noel has only 3 seconds left on his clock, and Antonio is stuck with two Vs and no place to play them.

Antonio sees the word WINGS on the board and adds his two tiles to form WINGSVV and slaps his clock. Noel challenges and wins the challenge. Noel quickly makes a play but does not go out.

On Antonio's next turn, he hurriedly puts his tiles in front of WINGS to form VVWINGS and slaps his clock again. Noel challenges again, wins the challenge, but after he makes his final play, he has gone over on time by 4 seconds.

Noel protests Antonio's behavior, saying he would not have gone over on time if Antonio had played normal words. What's the correct ruling?

Ruling: It is unethical to play blatant phonies to force one's opponent to go into overtime.

The director should erase the overtime penalty.

5.E Neutralizing the Clock on the Out Play

Case: Dwight has just made his final play in Round 1 of the Scranton Scrabble Scramble. His opponent Michael has only one tile left. Michael calls "Hold," and checks to be sure the bag is empty.

Thinking out loud, Michael says, "Let's see - I'm 15 points ahead but I'm going to lose 20 points because I'm stuck with this darned Q, so I guess I might as well challenge."

Dwight says, "You can't challenge now - the game is over." Is Dwight correct?

Ruling: Dwight is correct.

When Michael revealed the value of his unplayed tile, he conceded the game and cannot challenge the play.

5.F Director-Shortened Games

Case: At the Cinderella Challenge, all games must end by midnight. The Grand Duke issues a 5-minute warning, but as the clock strikes midnight, Gus and Jaq have not finished their game.

Gus has completed a turn but has not drawn all replacement tiles when the Grand Duke terminates play.

How do Gus and Jaq adjust the score?

Ruling: Gus should complete the process of drawing replacement tiles.

Both Gus and Jaq should then reduce their score by the value of their unplayed tiles.

5.G Adjusting the Score

Case: Norm and Cliff are in the middle of their game at the Cheers Chicken Chowder Chow-down Championship, with Norm ahead by the improbable score of 499-0.

After everyone else has left the playing room for the day, director Woody hears snoring and approaches to find that both players have fallen asleep. Norm's clock is running and is at -10:27. Cliff still has time left on his clock. What should director Woody do?

Ruling: Any game will be terminated when a player exceeds 10 minutes of overtime, and that player will automatically lose the game and have 100 points deducted from his or her score.

If after this deduction the opponent is still behind on points, their score is adjusted upward so that they win by one point.

In this scenario, Cliff wins 400-399.

Case: Jamie is nearly out of time. He quickly makes his final play and hits his clock, which now reads -0:00.

His opponent Adam tells him he has gone over and must deduct 10 points from his score. Is this correct?

Ruling: A digital clock that reads 0:00 or -0:00 is not in overtime; therefore, there is no 10-point time penalty.

5.1 Recounting the Game

Case: Kramer and Newman have just finished their game - with Kramer winning by two points. Newman announces that he wants to do a recount, but Kramer says, "Go ahead and do a recount if you want to but leave me out of this. It's time for lunch, and I'm going across the street to get a hot bowl of mulligatawny."

When Kramer returns to the playing area, Newman announces that he has finished the recount and that he won the game by one point.

When Kramer hears this, he wants to do a second recount. Is this allowed?

Ruling: No. If you decline to participate in a recount, you may not then demand another recount.

Case: The game has just ended, and Sidney reveals his tiles to Charles. They agree on the score. They have not turned in their tally slip. The score is 410-414 in Charles' favor. No recount is requested.

Shortly thereafter, Roger, who has been watching the game, interjects by saying that there were 2 spots where the score was incorrect. After further review, these scoring errors are confirmed. The score would now be 416-414, with Sidney ahead.

Who wins the game?

Ruling: Since both players had agreed on the score and no recount was requested, the score was final. The correct scoring is up to the players involved in the game.

Charles wins the game.

Roger should be admonished for commenting on a possible scoring discrepancy.

5.J Recording the Game

Case: Ralph and Norton finish their game in a tie.

Norton says, "Hey Ralphie boy, I guess one of us ought to turn in the results to the director."

Ralph says, "Norton, pal, the winner is supposed to turn the slip in, but I didn't win, and you didn't win." Which player should submit the results to the director?

Ruling: The player who went first turns in the results slip.

Case: Betty and Wilma have just finished their game at the Bedrock Brick Bash, with Betty winning by five points. They fill out their results slip, sign it, and hand it in to the director.

A moment later, Wilma realizes that Betty had gone over on time by 3 seconds - therefore, 10 points should have been deducted from her score.

Wilma explains to the director that she should have won the game by 5 points. Should the director change the result and credit Wilma with the win?

Ruling: No. Once the slip has been signed and turned in, the result is official and cannot be changed because of a scoring error.

Case: Jethro and Elly May have finished their game, with Elly May winning 250-225. They fill out the results slip, sign it, and hand it in to the director.

During the lunch break Jethro looks over his score sheet and realizes that they accidentally reversed the scores on the slip, erroneously writing that Jethro had won 250-225. He points this out to Elly May, who agrees that yes, they had filled it out incorrectly.

Should the director change the result of the game?

Ruling: Since both players agree that a recording error was made, the director should amend the results as long as the final round has not yet been paired.