

# **Summary of Changes to WESPA Rules Version 5.1**

In this document, Tournament Directors and players will find a summary to all the changes in WESPA Rules Version 5, including reasons and explanations behind the changes. Changes and key information are highlighted.

## **Addition to Rule 3.2.1 Elements of the Exchange**

"If a player returns unwanted tiles to the bag before drawing new tiles, they risk re-drawing the unwanted tiles. There is neither a correction nor a penalty for this mistake."

**Reasoning:** Clarification for when the steps are incorrectly followed.

## **Addition to Rule 3.6.1 Actions Reserved for the Player On Turn**

"Note that players may only request verification of game scores on their own time."

**Reasoning:** Specific mention that players cannot request score checks on their own time. Any request for checks made by a player not on-turn can be declined. Committee agreed that the language used in this addition needed to be positive.

## **Change to 3.9.7 Duty to Disclose Overdraw**

"Non-disclosure **can be** regarded as unethical behaviour."

**Reasoning:** Not every non-disclosure is deliberate and therefore cannot always be seen as unethical.

## **New Rule 3.9.8 Duty to Disclose Underdraw**

"A player who becomes aware that he or she has underdrawn must disclose the underdraw. Non-disclosure can be regarded as unethical behaviour (see 6.3 (Level 2 Offences))."

**Reasoning:** Indication of a player's responsibility when an underdraw occurs.

## **New Rule 3.9.12 Erroneously Returning Tiles to the Bag**

"Under no circumstances may drawn tiles be returned to the bag. The exceptions to this are: returning tiles after the completion of an exchange (Rule 3.2.1), and when correcting an overdraw (Rule 3.9.5) or a spillage (Rule 4.4). A tile is defined as drawn when your hand has completely left the bag."

(Note: Improperly returning tiles to the bag may be viewed as a suspicious act; the Tournament Director should apply a harsher penalty if cheating is suspected.)

If any drawn tiles are erroneously returned to the bag, the following procedure applies, where X = the number of tiles erroneously returned. If the number of tiles returned cannot be definitively ascertained, the Tournament Director will use their judgment to determine X (see Rule 6.1.2).

- (a) The clock is stopped;
- (b) The opponent draws X+3 (or if there are not enough tiles, all) from the bag plus three (or if there are not enough tiles, all) from the offender's rack, exposing them face-up to common view;
- (c) The opponent has 15 seconds to replenish the tiles on the offender's rack, and to return the remaining tiles to the bag. If the opponent requests more time, their clock may be started."

**Reasoning:** Mimics NASPA Rule IV.B.2. Committee agreed that because of the potential severity of erroneously returning tiles the bag, the penalties for doing so needed to be harsher than a regular overdraw.

### **Change to Rule 3.10.11 (b) Challenge Penalties**

#### 3.10.11 Mis-adjudication of a Challenge

If a move is challenged, and the challenge is discovered to have been mis-adjudicated, the error may be corrected if and only if:

(a) in the case of an unacceptable play being declared acceptable, no newly drawn tiles have touched the player's rack, or

(b) in the case of an acceptable play being declared unacceptable, the opponent has finished their turn.

In the case of (b), a player may petition the director for extra playing time. The tournament director will resolve any dispute that arises regarding the tiles or words played.

**Reasoning:** The wording in this rule was initially changed for clarity as to which circumstances applied for correcting a mis-adjudication. The committee felt that in the case of (b), additional time should be permitted to fix a mis-adjudication but also acknowledged that this would cause potential issues with players allocated time.

### **Addition to Rule 3.10.13 (a) Challenge Penalties**

"A player whose turn is successfully challenged loses that turn. A player whose challenge is unsuccessful may incur a penalty. Where tournaments use a point penalty system, it is recommended that these penalties are applied as an increase in the game score for the player whose turn was challenged."

**Reasoning:** WESPA Rules were previously unclear as to how challenge penalties were to be applied and inferred that point penalties could be deducted from the challenger's game score. Since the international norm is to add the penalty points to the move that was challenged, the wording has been changed to reflect this.

### **Addition to Rule 3.13.1 (a) (ii) Challenging Word Placement**

"Placing tiles such that the tiles do not all form part of one word (commonly known as 'disconnected tiles');"

**Reasoning:** Assist Tournament Directors who use an electronic device to search the Rules and to mirror commonly used language on the Internet Scrabble Club site.

### **New Rule 3.13.1 (a) (vi) Challenging Word Placement**

"Moving tiles from a previously played turn to a different position on the board, or to the player's rack, and completing the turn without the restoring of such tiles."

**Reasoning:** Mirrors NASPA Rule III.G.5 (c). Previously unspecified occurrence of an illegal move. Also allows tiles on the board to be deliberately removed, for example when shuffling letters on your rack, as long as they are replaced before the conclusion of the turn.

### **Change to Rule 5.3.5 Standard Game Time**

A game time of 25 minutes is considered standard. Events with time limits between 20 and 25 minutes may also be rated, subject to meeting other criteria as set out by the WESPA Ratings committee.

**Reasoning:** The previous rule had too much ambiguity and a fixed time frame for games was introduced for clarity for players, directors and tournament organisers.

**Addition to Rule 6.2.4 (c)**

WESPA may restrict the player's participation in future tournaments including virtual events

**Reasoning:** With WESPA adopting some virtual events, this change was brought in to ensure the ban for players who are caught cheating or guilty of abuse includes virtual events.