

Feb 1, 2009 NSA RULES REWRITE: SUMMARY OF POLICY CHANGES

(Note - Items marked with **asterisks (*)** are among the more significant.)

1. Resigning is specifically prohibited except when certain strict criteria are met. (I.B.)
- * **2. "Tanking" (playing in a purposely exaggeratedly poor manner) is specifically prohibited. (I.B.)**
3. The Policy on Disruptive, Intimidating and other Unacceptable Behavior (on the NSA website) is specifically referred to. (I.C.)
4. Rotisseries must be approved by the director and disclosed to all players in the division. (I.E.)
5. Game observers may not look up words while in view of either player. (I.F.)
6. When the clock is neutralized, players no longer are required to place tiles face down or to cover the board. (II.A.)
7. If anyone observes a game in progress whose clock should be on, but is not, s/he should inform those players. (II.C.5.)
- * **8. Braille tiles are now specifically prohibited. (III.A.2.)**
9. The traditional distribution of tiles is now specifically required. (III.A.2.)
10. The procedure to resolve adjacent identical tile sets has been slightly simplified. We now require a tile draw (closest to Z changes tiles) rather than consider which players at each board are going first or second. (III.A.2.)
- * **11. Clocks are now required for all NSA tournament games. (III.A.3.)**
12. Digital clocks which count down and show exact minutes and seconds of time and overtime are now preferred to analog clocks which do the same. (III.A.3.)
13. The rules now specify that the board must be 15x15 and contain the traditional premium square layout. (III.A.4.)
14. Earplugs are now specifically allowed. (III.A.7.)
15. Confirming tile distribution is no longer mandatory. (III.B.)
- * **16. Late players' clocks may be started 5 minutes into the round (formerly 3minutes). (III.C.)**
17. The rules clarify who may stop late player's clock when s/he arrives. It is the late player's responsibility, but opponent or Director MAY stop the clock. (III.C.)
18. The forfeiting player will be assumed to have gone 1st for the 1st forfeit, 2nd for the 2nd forfeit, 1st for the 3rd, etc. The other player receives neither 1sts nor 2nds. (III.D.)
19. If exactly 1/2 of a player's tiles are misoriented, the play will be assumed to be correctly oriented. (III.F.2.)
20. The penalty for playing upside down or sideways tiles three times has been removed. Opponent may neutralize the clock to correct such tiles. (III.F.3.)
21. While drawing tiles, players may not hold tiles in the non-drawing hand. (IV.B.1.)

22. The wording "show your open palm to your opponent" (when drawing tiles) has been replaced by "open the drawing hand." (IV.B.1.)

23. If any tiles spill from the bag during drawing, and one player has seen them, the other player may also see them before they are returned to the bag. (IV.B.3.)

24. The overdraw rule previously required one player to pick X+2 tiles and the other player to turn them over. Now the opponent of the overdrawer both chooses and turns over the X+2 tiles. (IV.B.4.a.)

25. The exception allowing players who suspect that a set contains fewer than 100 tiles to announce how many tiles they count in the bag has been eliminated. (IV.C.2.)

26. If tiles from a different game are accidentally drawn and played, but the mistake is not discovered until after the next play has been completed, the Director now removes the foreign tiles and replaces them with tiles from a NEUTRAL bag (to avoid giving the players information regarding whether or not remaining tiles are in the bag or on someone's rack). (IV.C.3.b.)

***27. If you mistakenly hit opponent's clock, you will not lose your turn. Opponent will be granted an extra minute of game time. (IV.E.1.)**

28. When passing, the recommendation that the player say "pass zero" has been removed. (IV.E.1.)

***29. When exchanging all seven tiles, you may no longer keep them on your rack during the exchange. All tiles to be exchanged must be placed face down on the table. (IV.E.2.a.(2).)**

30. Blank Designation Rule Changes: (IV.F.1 through IV.F.3.)

A.The clock may be stopped to locate blank designation slips.

B.The blank designation ship need no longer be shown to the opponent, but it must be placed midway between the players.

***C.If your opponent does not designate the blank correctly, you may restart his/her clock.**

D.The blank designation becomes binding AFTER the NEXT play is completed.

E.The rule allowing the opponent to later designate an undefined blank has been removed.

31. Under the procedure for completing a turn, the step "Record your play, if desired" was added as the 7th step, just before drawing and tracking tiles. (IV.G.1.)

32. If you complete your turn without starting opponent's clock or without recording your cume, and your play is then challenged off, any replacement tiles you may have drawn are NOT subject to the overdraw rule if they were not mixed with your remaining tiles. They are simply returned to the bag. (IV.G.2.a., IV.G.2.b.)

***33. Players are now allowed a minimum of 5 seconds to consider holding or challenging (up from 2-3 seconds). The name of this rule is no longer referred to as "fast-bagging." (IV.G.2.d.)**

34. If opponent requests that you announce your previous play or score, it is now mandatory that you comply (not simply "in the spirit of the game."). (IV.H.1.)

35. The advice to regularly ask for score verifications throughout the game has been removed. People may still do so, but it is no longer recommended that verifications be sought on every turn. (IV.H.2.)

***36. If the bag is empty and you have stopped recording cume to save time, and if opponent asks for verification of your cume, you need only give your last calculated cume. (IV.H.2.)**

37. The advice to move the bag to your side of the board whenever you say hold has been removed. (IV.I.2.)

38. The language describing when a hold is released has been made clear. Any verbal acceptance releases the hold unless the player clearly did not intend to do so. (IV.I.1.)

39. Withdrawing a challenge without penalty when you misunderstand a blank's designation is permitted only if the designation has not become binding. (IV.I.3.)

40. The suggestion to place contestant score cards or "do not touch board" signs on the board during a self-adjudication has been removed. (IV.J.1.)

***41. During self-adjudication, both players should walk to and from the computer without speaking. (IV.J.1.d.)**

42. During self-adjudication, if you arrive at the computer station and either player thinks the entered word(s) may be wrongly recorded, you may return to the board to verify. (IV.J.1.e.)

43. If either player delays reracking after a self-adjudication, the clock may be immediately restarted. Otherwise the clock starts when any phoney has been removed from the board and when all face down tiles have been reracked. (IV.J.1.1.)

***44. If one player is solely responsible for a separate lookup of two challenged words, and if the play is "unacceptable," that player receives a 10 point game penalty. If the play is found to be unacceptable before all words have been checked, the remaining words should not be looked up. (IV.J.2.)**

***45. Self-adjudication is now mandatory unless one is physically challenged or unless no adjudication computers are available. (IV.K.1.)**

***46. A manual Word Judge may use a computer in lieu of a direct book lookup unless the players have specifically requested a non-computer lookup. (IV.K.3.e.)**

47. The Word Judge is no longer required to turn his/her back to the players when looking up words. (IV.K.3.)

48. The rule prohibiting the Word Judge from reminding players to restart clocks has been removed. (IV.K.3.)

49. If a tile(s) is found in the bag within 20 seconds (formerly 5) of the final play, and if both players have not yet signed tally sheets, the tile(s) goes to whomever should have gotten it and the game must be continued if the "out" player receives the tile(s). (V.A.3.)

***50. After the final play, the opponent has 20 seconds (up from 5) to hold or challenge. (V.D.)**

51. If the clock is not stopped on the final play, the game is over and the clock considered neutralized 20 seconds (up from 5) after unplayed tiles have been revealed, or their point values stated. (V.D.)

52. If tally sheets are used to report results but scorecards are still used to determine 1sts and 2nds, then scorecards must be initialed at the end of the game only to verify 1sts and 2nds. (V.I.)

53. All tally sheets must be signed or initialed. (The previous rules stated that scorecards must be signed or initialed.) V.I.

54. Previously, after results had been signed or initialed, scoring errors could be corrected if both players agreed. NOW, only REPORTING errors may be adjusted after tally sheets are signed or initialed. Scoring errors found by later analysis of a game, for example, may not be utilized. (V.I.)

55. References to specifically colored premium squares have been removed. (Appendix - Basic Rules of Play and Scoring.)

CROSS-REFERENCING THE OLD GUIDELINES TO THE NEW RULES

1. Stuck with an Unplayable Tile: V.B.
2. Undesignated Blanks: IV.F.
3. Shuffling Tiles Before the Game Begins: III.E.
4. Finding the Missing Tiles: V.A.
5. When the Timer is Still Ticking After the Game: V.D.
6. Delayed Tile Tracking: IV.G.2.c.
7. Drawing Tiles Out of Order: IV.B.5.
8. Colluding with the Opponent or Purposefully Losing: I.E.
9. Inappropriate Behavior: I.D.
10. Cheating: I.A.
11. Word Judging: IV.K.3.
12. Changing Game Results: V.I.
13. End of the Game Underdrawing: IV.B.6.
14. Clock Courtesy: V.D.
15. Announcing the Play Again: IV.H.1.
16. Denying Opponent Visual Access to the Board: IV.D.
17. Loose Tiles: IV.B.3, V.A.
18. A Rack with More than Seven Tiles: II.C.3., IV.B.4.b.
19. Forfeits: A: III.C.; B: V.E.; C: III.C., V.H.
20. Playing with Overdrawn Rack: II.C.3., IV.B.4.b.
21. Abusive Behavior: I.C.
22. Adjacent Tiles: III.A.2.
23. Extra Tiles in the Game: IV.C.3.
24. Opponent's Timer Already Started: IV.G.1.e.
25. Adjacent Games with Equivalent Tiles: III.A.2.
26. Fast-bagging: IV.G.2.d.
27. Overdrawing the Overdrawer: IV.B.4.a.
28. Silent Tile-Counts: IV.C.2.
29. Kibitzing is a Privilege: I.F.
30. Mixing the Tiles: IV.B.1.
31. Tiles Above the Table: IV.C.1.
32. Misinterpretations: I.G.
33. Principle of Ethics: IV.H.
34. Looking at the Board and Neutralization: II.A.