

1st July 2023

A Note to Players on Fair Play

Fair Play is one of the key aspects to the conduct of a successful tournament and it is imperative for us as a community to safeguard the same. This note is meant to address the seemingly limited awareness of WESPA scrabble rules amongst players

WESPA has defined 3 levels under General Conduct which amount to unfair play – Cheating & Abusive Behaviour (Level 1 offence), Unethical Behaviour (Level 2 offence) and Poor Etiquette (Level 3 Offence). We are appending the Level 1 Offences under Schedule 1 for reference at the end of this note, which are the severest offences that every player ought to be aware of. You may go through the detailed list of all the levels along with other rules at: <https://www.wespa.org/wesparulesv4.pdf>

SAI has put together this note for the benefit of all stakeholders to outline players' responsibilities to help create awareness, and to invite their participation to both eliminate unfair practices at tournaments and uphold the integrity of the game.

Players' Responsibilities:

While games between individuals are self-monitored, and playing fairly is a responsibility of every player, players are also expected to bring to attention any wrongdoings observed in the course of a tourney

If you suspect a player of committing an act that seems inappropriate, you are required to bring it to the attention of:

- a) The player/s themselves if you feel it is something unintentional and may be easily rectified (during a game between the 2 players)
- b) The Tournament Director (during a tournament)
- c) The Tournament Organizer (at the end of a tournament)
- d) The SAI Ethics Sub-Committee (after a tournament is over)

Not reporting the act at all even though the suspicion may not be definitive and without proof, is subverting one's responsibility. The time to report it is ideally the moment it is observed but it may also be done retrospectively at the end of the tourney if it strikes the observer as important and was missed to report earlier.

The players witness to such an act can also report any such suspicions to any of the 3 representatives of the SAI Ethics Sub-Committee which comprises of Ela Ghose, Rajiv Antao and Udayan Grover.

Possible Action:

The Tournament Organisers and TD in turn have the responsibility of passing on all reports including any notes of their own to the Ethics Committee so that a history of such offences may be collated. It is also to be noted that the TD has the discretion to take any action during a tournament that he/she deems fit upon a complaint, and his decision is final; this may include direct eviction of an offending player from the tournament, and/or nullifying all games played by him/her.

The Ethics Committee is empowered to take a decision based on TD's reports and a history of past offences, and can decide on players' participation in future tournaments.

Affected parties would have the right to appeal against such a judgment, and SAI will follow an appeal procedure similar to that outlined by WESPA in the rules.

The reports on the investigations of each incident will be maintained by the Ethics Sub-Committee alone and kept confidential. However, the incidents themselves (without directly referencing the players concerned or the tournament where it occurred) will be shared with the community. This will be updated once every 6 months.

There will be a separate list of suspected offenders if any, (of those participating in the event) which will be circulated to TDs and the primary representative of the organisers for extra vigilance at the tournament

Schedule 1: Extract from WESPA Rules on Level 1 Offences

(Complete set of rules are available at <https://www.wespa.org/wesparulesv4.pdf>)

6.2.1 Definition of Cheating: Any deliberate bad-faith violation of these Rules or the Standard Rules is an act of cheating. Cheating includes, but is not limited to:

- (a) collusion;
- (b) concealing or palming tiles;
- (c) knowingly announcing or accepting incorrect move scores or cumulative scores;
- (d) knowingly misreporting game results;
- (e) using marked tiles;
- (f) looking inside the bag;
- (g) using accomplices, objects or materials to obtain an unfair advantage;
- (h) when a player knowingly misrepresents his or her start/reply record when self-balancing starts are in use.

6.2.2 Suspected Cheating:

- (a) Players must avoid any personal action that might incur suspicion, and draw to the attention of their opponents any such action on their part.
- (b) A player who believes that an act of cheating has occurred in his or her game should call the Tournament Director.
- (c) A third party who witnesses an act of suspected cheating may not intervene directly, but must report the incident to the Tournament Director

6.2.3 Definition of Abusive Behaviour: Abusive behaviour includes, but is not limited to:

- (a) making unauthorised physical contact with another player or a tournament official that intimidates, threatens or harms that person;
- (b) making a statement that intimidates, threatens or insults another player or a tournament official;
- (c) performing any other antisocial act that intimidates, threatens, insults or harms another player or a tournament official.