



SCRABBLE

ASSOCIATION OF INDIA

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FAIR PLAY NOTE ON DRAWING OF TILES

Prepared By: The SAI Ethics Committee

There have been several complaints following the Mu Sigma tournament in Jan 2024 on improper drawing of tiles.

The Ethics Committee of SAI (the Scrabble Association of India) would like to draw your attention to the following extract from the current WESPA Rules (which we follow at all tournaments).

WESPA Rules Extract:

3.9 Drawing Tiles

3.9.1 Bag Position

When drawing tiles, a player must:

- (a) hold the tile bag so that its rim is at or above eye level;*
- (b) avert his or her eyes from the tile bag; and*
- (c) keep the tile bag in full view of the opponent.*

3.9.2 Drawing Protocols

- (a) Players need not draw tiles individually.*
- (b) Players must not put a hand containing tiles into the tile bag. All drawn tiles must be placed on the rack or the table before further tiles are drawn.*
- (c) Players must show an empty hand both before and after drawing.*
- (d) Tiles must be drawn with reasonable speed.*

3.9.3 Keeping Tiles Above the Table

Players must keep all tiles above the level of the playing table at all times.

Some common breaches:

3.9.1 (a) and (b) Breach: Not holding the bag at or above eye level when drawing:

The common misconception is that it is ok to hold the bag below eye-level as long as eyes are averted. This is WRONG. The opponent cannot be checking whether eyes have been averted at every pick, and in the last tournament there was at least one complaint that there were a few instances of face not turned and eyes not averted (for some picks by a player who holds the bag below eye level when picking).

3.9.1 (c) Breach: Not keeping the bag in full view of the opponent:



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Less common but some players draw tiles with the bag on their lap. This is not allowed. EVEN if the face is averted, the bag needs to be in full view.

3.9.2 (b), (c) Breach: Not showing an empty hand before and after drawing (i.e. not showing an empty hand when putting a hand in the bag to draw):

After drawing show an open palm before putting it back in the bag to draw more tiles. There have been complaints that a player has palmed tiles by drawing 2 tiles but placing only 1 down, and putting the other one back in the bag (selecting which one to put down). There is no proof that this has been done so no action taken, but it is a clear case of cheating. To prevent this - **always** show your open palm before putting your hand in the bag. Not doing so is a LEVEL 1 breach, and can be considered cheating. We ask all players to start doing this so that players who do it with the intention of cheating cannot get away with it.

Action Points:

Although there may be only 1 in 100 players that breach the above rules to cheat, many players do this with no intention of cheating, not realising it is a breach.

We have been lenient at tournaments so far, but with increased instances of suspected cheating, we have to be stricter. We cannot catch the dishonest player when there are so many inadvertently breaching this rule.

Going forward Tournament Directors for SAI are instructed to strictly implement these rules.

Breaches can result in warnings (maximum 2 before a penalty is imposed) or removal from the game or from the tournament based on the TD's interpretation of the nature of the breach.

Breaches will also be reported to the SAI Ethics Committee or Management Committee by the TD, and further penalties may be awarded as per findings (and precedents).

It is likely that some players have a physical difficulty that prevents them from raising the bag when drawing. This has to be declared to the Tournament Director BEFORE the start of the tournament, explaining the full nature of the disability, and if accepted by the TD, the player can draw with the bag below eye level. However that player will have to turn his/ her face away from the bag AND avert eyes when drawing AND ensure the bag is above table level.

We look forward to the cooperation of all players so we can ensure Scrabble tournaments are conducted in the spirit of fair play!