NASPA

Director

Manual

North American SCRABBLE® Players Association

Making words, building friendships

Dallas • Toronto

Contents

I. Introduction

This Director Manual is designed to help you learn all about how to run a SCRABBLE® club and a SCRABBLE® tournament using North American SCRABBLE® Players Association (NASPA) guidelines and rules. It is a "how-to" guide that you can refer to when answers are needed for special situations that arise in club and tournament play.

The director of a club or tournament has a great deal of flexibility and responsibility. Some clubs operate like social gathering, others are run like SCRABBLE tournaments and still others endeavor to maintain a balance between the two. You and your players will develop your club's unique personality.

Regardless of whether you wish to direct a club, a tournament or both, we want you to know where you can go to find answers when questions arise. The official NASPA website (www.scrabbleplayers.org) contains a section for directors. It is well worth exploring.

Please do not hesitate to contact NASPA should the need arise. Email naspa-tourney@yahoogroups.com or naspa-club-directors@yahoogroups.com for help with your tournament or club.

Special thanks to NASPA committee members Ted Gest, Cornelia Guest, John Green, Judy Newhouse and Mary Rhoades for their invaluable contributions to this 2013 Director Manual.

Sincerely,

Chris Cree, Director Manual Committee Chair

North American SCRABBLE® Players Association

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Director Manual Committee – naspa-dm@yahoogroups.com

To communicate with your fellow directors join the NASPA Tournament/Club Director Yahoo group by emailing: Naspa-tcd-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

I.A. Help Us Protect the Trademark

Hasbro, Inc. is the trademark holder of SCRABBLE® Brand Crossword Game in North America. The company is sensitive about the use and misuse of the trademark because it wishes to preserve its legal right to its exclusive use.

When referring to the game we play, either orally or in print, please refer to it as SCRABBLE® Brand Crossword Game. The trademark, SCRABBLE®, may not be used without the expressed permission of Hasbro, Inc. or NASPA.

When referring to your club, always identify it as "NASPA SCRABBLE® Club #xxx [location]" (e.g., NASPA SCRABBLE® Club #44 Los Angeles).

For this manual, we will always put the word SCRABBLE in caps with a register mark when the word is part of the North American SCRABBLE® Players Association (NASPA), a tournament title such as the National SCRABBLE® Championship, or the game itself, SCRABBLE® Brand Crossword Game. Otherwise we will omit the register mark after the first occurrence of the word in a section.

I.B. Equal Access

The North American SCRABBLE® Players Association (NASPA) does not tolerate discrimination in any manner, shape or form. All persons who behave in an orderly, respectful manner are welcome to participate in any NASPA club or event for which they qualify.

Whenever possible, directors are strongly advised to secure tournament and club access for the physically challenged. Such information should accompany any materials or information sent to NASPA as well as your promotions and advertising of an event.

I.C. How to Use This Document

Throughout this document highlighted texts are hyperlinks that allow you to click on a link and bring up the specified webpage.

There are also page references (e.g., the Document History reference below) that you can click on to go to the referred page. These page references are available in the document and in the Table of Contents. Note: hold down the CTRL key and click on the page number.

See "A.4. Document History" on page 61 for a summary of changes to this document.

I.D. Transition: NASPA takes over from NSA

On July 1, 2009, the North American SCRABBLE® Players Association (NASPA) took over responsibility for Tournaments and Clubs from the National SCRABBLE® Association (NSA). The NSA ceased operations on June 30, 2013 and Hasbro, Inc. assumed responsibility for the School SCRABBLE program. This document mentions the NSA where appropriate for historical accuracy/context, but otherwise NASPA is the governing body for competitive SCRABBLE play in North America.

II. Director Responsibilities

Keep in mind that as a director you represent not only your own interest for promoting the SCRABBLE® Brand Crossword Game, but also the interests of NASPA and Hasbro, Inc. The proper behavior of our directors will affect the future of all organized SCRABBLE.

It is important for all NASPA directors to remember they are also NASPA's public representatives. NASPA is Hasbro's official organization to promote competitive club and tournament SCRABBLE play.

Accordingly, directors should only promote competitive SCRABBLE play through NASPA and no other organization except in the case of advertising, in which they should identify their clubs and tournaments as NASPA clubs and tournaments. In exchange for these services, directors have been granted exclusive territorial rights for their clubs and tournaments by NASPA.

The first responsibility of NASPA directors is to represent NASPA in a professional, moral, ethical, fair, welcoming and encouraging manner.

The second responsibility of a NASPA director is to perform the duties of a director in order to provide more, not fewer, opportunities for all players to participate, which is why entreating anyone to renounce his or her NASPA membership is unacceptable as it decreases the opportunities available to them to participate in competitive SCRABBLE.

While NASPA directors may belong to multiple organizations and play in events for multiple organizations, they may not become club/tournament directors of another organization, recruit members for an organization other than NASPA, or entreat players to renounce their membership in NASPA.

Any director who does not abide by the policies can have his/her director's certification revoked by NASPA.

NASPA has no qualms with its directors:

- running or assisting with School SCRABBLE events because School SCRABBLE is the bailiwick of Hasbro, and NASPA has a working relationship with Hasbro
- running or assisting with WESPA tourneys because NASPA has a working relationship with WESPA

- running or assisting with any SCRABBLE-related fund-raisers for literacy or charities. (Note: anyone organizing such an event should contact Hasbro for permission to use the SCRABBLE trademark.)
- running or assisting with non-SCRABBLE events because, well...they're non-SCRABBLE events

II.A. Becoming a Director

NASPA has a testing process for persons who would like to be club and/or tournament directors. Once the test is passed, the applicant becomes an apprentice and a mentor is assigned to him/her to help him/her develop one's directorial skills. A checklist for this apprenticeship is sent to both the apprentice and mentor. Once the mentor feels the apprentice is ready to become a full director, NASPA is notified and the change in directorial status is updated. The checklist includes the following skills:

II.A.1. Criteria for Attaining Status as a Club or Tournament Director

These are the criteria used by the NASPA Club-Directors Committee to certify applicants as club or tournament directors. The explanations of key items can be found in the pages that follow.

A NASPA Club Director:

- must take and pass the Director Test
- must understand how the SCRABBLE® trademark name must be protected
- must know basic SCRABBLE rules: scoring rules, how to handle overdraws, what "hold" means, how to find applicable rules in the rule book
- must show a willingness to learn the more complex rules
- must be approachable and possess adequate people skills
- must present a welcoming demeanor to newcomers
- must be fair yet firm in maintaining club policies and handling disputes
- must understand the basics of NASPA's Code of Conduct and why its enforcement is important in a club setting

A NASPA Tournament Director:

Includes all of the items a Club Director must attain plus...

- must understand what items are necessities at tournaments
- must understand NASPA's membership requirements for tournament play
- must understand the basics of how basic pairing systems work
- must understand the Gibson Rule and its application

- must understand the basic mathematics of tournament play (i.e. for every win in a division there must be a corresponding loss; if there are no byes or penalties, each division's total plus/minus must equal zero, etc.)
- must understand the importance of submitting tournament results to NASPA promptly
- must understand the importance of reporting any Code of Conduct violations to NASPA promptly
- must understand how NASPA's participation fee structure works
- must be able to handle player disputes calmly and professionally
- must be willing to enforce NASPA's Code of Conduct whenever necessary to maintain order
- must be well versed regarding common rule situations (drawing tiles out of order, how the courtesy draw rule works, etc.)
- must possess above average people skills and present a positive image of NASPA
- does not get rattled in difficult situations

II.B. Liaison with NASPA

While players should be encouraged to interact with NASPA on their own, each director should be prepared to act as a liaison between players and NASPA as appropriate.

1. Encourage NASPA membership and renewals. These can be handled easily at the NASPA website http://www.scrabbleplayers.org/w/Membership or through the mail.
2. Relay details of important NASPA updates (e.g., rules changes, procedural and policy changes).
3. Correspond with NASPA regarding rule clarifications, interesting plays, photos, statistics, new club records, etc.

II.C. Administer the Rules

1. Oversee each session in accordance with the rules and regulations set forth in this Director Manual and the Official Tournament Rules.

2. Be the final arbiter in game decisions.

3. Be alert to the possibility of inappropriate behavior and take necessary action if need be. See Code of Conduct and the Incident Report Form available on the NASPA website.

    http://www.scrabbleplayers.org/w/Code_of_Conduct

    http://www.scrabbleplayers.org/wiki/images/2/2d/Incident_Report_Form.pdf

II.D. Handling Director Calls

When called to a game for a question or ruling, ask the players to explain what happened. You may have to go back a few steps to get the complete picture. Ask both players to verify that they agree with the stated facts of the situation (e.g., who played what, where the tiles were, what the clock status was, etc.).

Do not rush to make a ruling. Take your time to make sure you have all relevant information first. If you have any uncertainty, always look up the relevant rules on the spot to confirm you are applying them correctly. Explain to the players how the rules apply to their situation and why you are ruling in a particular way. You should always be able to explain your ruling and back it up from the rules in the book. If you have to improvise because the current situation is not mentioned specifically, you should still be able to point to a relevant rule (e.g., players should not benefit from irregularities they created).

If a player requests a second opinion, get another director (if available) and have that director start over in the questioning process so they can get a fresh look. Do not just tell the other director what you think happened. Going through the questioning again can sometimes bring up new information or provide new insight to the situation.

Remember that players can be keyed up at a tournament (or even at club), so help them calm down by focusing on the facts of the situation. Do not express opinions until you are ready to rule and try to be as objective and neutral as possible.

II.E. Handling Incidents

If you determine that a player is misbehaving, give the player a warning. After a second warning (or after the first, if the behavior is egregious enough), tell the player that the next offense will mean removal from the tournament; and then follow through with your warning. Players need to know that there are consequences that are immediate in addition to any subsequent ruling by the Tournament Committee or Club/Director Committee. It may be uncomfortable to confront a player who is misbehaving, but as a Director it is your responsibility to occasionally take on this unpleasant task.

If a player's behavior is inappropriate, violates the Code of Conduct, involves repeated rules violations or cheating, then you need to file an Incident Report Form (IRF) with NASPA in addition to meting out the appropriate penalty at the time. Depending upon the seriousness of the offense, you might choose to discipline or eject the player on the spot, or you might wait and let the appropriate NASPA committee handle it later. It is preferable to have the director deal with a violation immediately after it occurs.

You should write up the incident as soon as possible, while details are fresh in your mind. Collect names and contact information from witnesses and have them write up their recollections of the events as soon as possible (preferably before they leave the venue). Be detailed in explaining what happened, who was involved, what each person said, what you saw and heard and what was done at the time to resolve the issue.

Incident Reports are taken seriously, and are investigated by NASPA in a timely manner. While most Incident Reports are submitted by Directors, a player can submit an IRF as well.

III. Starting and Directing a SCRABBLE® Club

III.A. Guidelines and Responsibilities

Every club must have at least one sanctioned director who is a current member of NASPA. For a person to become a sanctioned director, the individual must pass the Director's Test and assume all responsibilities as described herein.

III.B. Club Sanctioning

When completing an application for a new club, the day, hour and place of each scheduled session is to be indicated. This data will become part of the Official Roster of Clubs in the US and Canada and will be listed on the NASPA website.

Any changes regarding where or when the club is held or who the directors are should be emailed to the NASPA Club-Directors Committee, naspa-club-directors@yahoogroups.com

It is not necessary to notify NASPA if an individual club session has to be cancelled because of a conflict with a tournament, inclement weather, religious or recognized national holidays or because no director is available to lead the session.

III.C. Club Name

All sanctioned clubs will be assigned a club number and that will serve as their official name, e.g., NASPA SCRABBLE Club # __. If an existing games club wishes to offer SCRABBLE to its members, it must apply for sanctioning and use only the official club number for its SCRABBLE activities.

III.D. Locating Your Club

When you first start your club, pick a day and location that work best for you and the people you initially recruit to attend. As time goes by, you might move to a different location or have different start and end times, but it is important to meet where and when you advertise so club members and visitors can rely upon a club official to be there. Some clubs rent space, while others meet in bookstores or public locations, like restaurants, where purchases can be made in lieu of paying for use of the space.

III.E. Club Dues

Most clubs charge modest club dues. This may cover basic club expenses such as rent, materials, prizes, refreshments, etc., or be set aside for future or unseen needs. To encourage participation by players of all ages, you might consider a Senior Citizen discount or offer a student discount to attract younger players. Often dues are waived for the first session attended by a newcomer.

III.F. Supplies Needed

All members should be told at the outset that they should bring acceptable equipment:

*   Deluxe board
*   Racks
*   Tournament style tiles
*   Game timer

The Director should additionally bring:

*   *Official Tournament and Club Word List, current edition*
*   *Long List (LL)*
*   *Official Tournament Rules*

Optional suggestions:

*   Score sheets
*   Tally slips
*   Newcomer supplies – Information sheet, Printed word lists
*   Laptop for Word Judging

III.G. Pairing Players at Club

Some clubs are run very casually and players choose their own partners to play with. Others use a rigid ladder system, and many others pair players using a modified King-of-the-Hill method adjusted to avoid repeats.

Use a pairing method that you think will work best and modify it, if necessary, to suit the needs of your players.

III.G.1. Expert Points

Some clubs award Expert Points (one point for each club game win) to encourage and celebrate club achievements. They can be a motivating factor for the newcomer to continue attending your club. Those certificates reflect many hard-fought victories.

Certificates may be awarded only to current members of NASPA. It is up to the club director to notify NASPA which Expert Award certificates should be awarded and what level. Some typical levels of achievement are: 50, 100, 250, 500 and 1000 Club wins.

Check this page on the NASPA website for more information on Expert Points and Certificates: http://www.scrabbleplayers.org/w/Clubs#Expert_Point_Certificates.

III.H. Club-related Director Responsibilities

It is desirable for each club to have more than one director who is a current member of NASPA. This enables the club responsibilities to be shared, which in turn makes it that much easier to maintain club stability and continuity.

Each director should:

1. Encourage NASPA membership and renewals. These can be handled easily at the NASPA website or through the mail.
2. Oversee each session in accordance with the rules and regulations set forth in this Director Manual and the Official Tournament Rules.
3. Be the final arbiter in game decisions.
4. Collect any dues from attendees near the start of each session.
5. Relay details of any NASPA updates or tournament news.
6. Be alert to the possibility of inappropriate behavior and take necessary action. See NASPA Code of Conduct and the Incident Report Form (IRF) available on the NASPA website.
7. Correspond with NASPA at naspa-club-directors@yahoogroups.com regarding rule clarifications, interesting plays, photos, statistics, new club records, etc.

IV. Club Sessions

IV.A. Administrative Functions

Alert your players of upcoming tournaments and procedures for entering them.

Have a copy of the *Official Tournament Rules* available for club sessions and encourage your club members to read it.

Remind your players about correct procedures.

Examples: Periodically check to make sure all players have a maximum of 7 tiles on their rack. Remind players to keep the tile bag raised above eye level and avert their eyes from the bag when drawing tiles. Encourage players to call out for the director if they have any question about rules or procedures.

IV.B. Welcoming Newcomers

Whether your club is new or has a long history, you should always be ready to welcome new players. In order to make the newcomer's first club session as welcoming as possible, we suggest the following as you deem appropriate:

1. Get the player's name, address, phone number and email address.
2. Before the first game begins, either the director or an experienced player should show and explain the "tools of the trade" to the newcomer; the game timer and how it works, tournament style tiles, dual scorekeeping, the sequence of play, etc. Additionally, describe how to challenge a play by demonstrating the adjudication procedure that your club uses (SSL or manual lookup).
3. Provide newcomers with printed word lists containing basic words (2's, 3's, etc., check NASPA website for printable word lists) and have them begin to familiarize themselves with the basic words. You may allow them to use word lists during club play for a few sessions.
4. Explain the differences between club/tournament play and home play. For example, the blank may not be exchanged for the letter it designates after it is played, one cannot get a free trade-in if one has three or more of a particular tile on one's rack, etc. Introduce them to the Official Tournament Rules at a time you deem appropriate.

5. Explain to new players that the challenge may be greater when playing an experienced club player. This may be explained by the newcomer's unfamiliarity to use of the clock, the game time limit and often used two- and three-letter words.

6. Tell the new player about NASPA, membership and tournaments.

7. Be helpful and understanding about any infractions until the newcomer becomes accustomed to the procedures.

IV.C. Keeping Newcomers

The SCRABBLE club and tournament scene is thriving with several thousand people regularly taking part. Despite wide publicity, including Stefan Fatsis's 2001 book *"Word Freak: Heartbreak, Triumph, Genius and Obsession in the World of Competitive SCRABBLE Players,"* various movies about SCRABBLE, ESPN telecasts and School SCRABBLE promotions, only a tiny fraction of SCRABBLE players in North America joins the tournament and club ranks. This holds true throughout the world.

One key to increasing our numbers is to do more to retain newcomers at both clubs and tournaments.

Most of us have had this experience: A new player walks into a club having heard about us from a friend or on the Internet. We tell the person, "This is how we do it..." Even if paired with lower rated players, the newcomer is soundly defeated in several games and is never seen again.

Of course, it is possible that this player is one of the many who will never enjoy playing in a club or tournament regardless of how nice the regulars are. It is also possible that the fault lies on our side.

A previous edition of this manual pointed out that most newcomer dropouts of organizations, in general, result from "an attitude of indifference or superiority towards them by the regular members."

IV.D. Suggestions from Club Directors

Here are some suggestions that other club directors have made to combat this tendency:

Get the word out to people most likely to be interested in club play. Send out **press releases** to local media about your club and/or your tournaments. Often, a story about your tournament will bring new players into your club. Note that this includes not only daily or weekly newspapers, but local blogs and newsletters.

Contact organizations whose members might have an interest in competitive SCRABBLE® (e.g., game clubs, literary organizations, libraries, community clubs, public parks, etc.).

Provide a full welcome to new players. This should include sitting down with the newcomer to explain in some detail how club/tournament play differs from living room play, and encouraging the person to observe some games, particularly among medium or lower rated players.

Suspend key rules for the newcomer's first few visits. This could include nonpayment of club dues, free challenges, in-game access to word lists and not using the clock (or giving newcomers an extra 5 minutes or some other allowance per game).

Even if this is not done in the newcomer's first few games, explain why it is important for both players to keep score. Everyone makes errors. It is important that both players agree on the score.

It is ideal to try to pair a newcomer with a player whose temperament is suited to easing a newcomer into the mechanics of club play.

Try to **avoid pairing two newcomers** together as neither of them will probably know how to use the clock, draw tiles, score, etc. Once they have played a few games with experienced club players, then you can pair newcomers together.

Monitor the newcomer's performance and offer to help when appropriate. Some players welcome advice; others do not. Another possibility is a team game in which you or another veteran plays with the newcomer so that you can discuss the pros and cons of potential plays as they happen.

At the end of the club session (or afterwards by e-mail or phone), ask the newcomer about his/her experience. Offer advice about improving his/her game, and reinforce that the first visit is often a daunting experience and that you hope they will come back again.

If a new player does not return after one or two sessions, get in touch to determine why. It may be that they just are not going to enjoy sanctioned play. Or, it may be that they have concerns that you can resolve, particularly with the level of their competition.

Listed below are some sample issues and possible answers about formal competitive SCRABBLE provided by veteran directors Luise Shafritz and Ted Gest.

—If people say, *"I just want to play for fun—I do not care about word lists and ratings."* The fun comes through learning and playing new words, increasing playing skills by planning ahead for good tiles and seeing new board patterns. It is a lot of fun to learn ways to get thirty points for the same tiles that you used to get only ten for!

—*"I'm not good enough."* Our club members represent many skill and experience levels from beginners to experts. The way to get better is to play against more experienced players.

—*"Why must I use a timer?"* We use timers to ensure that everyone gets to play the allotted number of full games during the club session. It makes for a much fairer and more exciting game when both people have time restrictions. Using the clock may seem

awkward at first, but most players get used to using the clock after a few sessions. Once you learn easy shortcuts to scorekeeping and what "rack management" and "hot spots" are all about, you will play much faster, and hardly even think about the clock.

—*"Do I need to know tens of thousands of obscure words?"* Not really. Expert level players spend a lot of time studying, but when you are just beginning we suggest first learning all of the 2-letter words and then you can move on to the 3-letter words, common "bingo" stems, and other word lists that interest you. The two-letter words can be mastered in a few months of club play. It may take longer for the 3-letter words. You only need to learn as many words as you want to, but be warned, once you start studying, it is often hard to stop!

—*"What should I do with blanks or esses?"* Those are the most valuable tiles in the bag. If you have a blank and an S on your rack along with a good mix of one-point tiles (like AEINRST) the chances are excellent for finding a 7-letter word (called a bingo) worth a bonus of 50 points. It takes a little practice but we can show you how! As your anagramming skills improve, try to set goals for yourself. For example, try not to use an S for fewer than 20 points (unless you have another one on your rack) or a blank for fewer than 40 points.

—*"What about other high-point tiles?"* Joining two letter X words like AX, EX, OX, XI, XU in parallel two-letter words can score 50 or more points in a single turn.

IV.E. Minors

If the new player is a minor and has come to the club with a parent or guardian, explain to them both that the *Official Tournament Word List* is slightly different from the *Official SCRABBLE Players Dictionary* found in stores and includes words that may be considered offensive but are acceptable for play. You should also make it clear that the young player will be expected to follow your club procedures.

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V. Organizing & Directing a SCRABBLE® Tournament

Please note that much of the text in this section applies to multiday events. Please use the following information as it best relates to your upcoming event, be it a multiday or one-day tournament.

We encourage you to contact other directors and players and learn from their experience as well as your own experiences from events that you have attended.

With the excellent tournament software available today, a single director can easily manage a tournament of up to 40 players or more. Some directors are even able to play in their own tournaments. For a multiday tournament you will probably need a team.

To sanction your NASPA tournament, apply to the NASPA Tournament Committee. The [NASPA Tournament Sanctioning Request Form](#) is located on the NASPA website.

V.A. Assemble a Team

Many directors begin by forming a tournament team. Even if you have a team assembled, please do not hesitate to contact the NASPA Tournament Committee should you need advice on your tournament. You can also consult with other NASPA directors.

V.B. Strategize With Your Team

You will need a committed team to help with long-range planning to decide what kind of tournament you want, to look for a tournament venue, etc., mid-range planning (register players, get equipment and materials, etc.), and at-the-tournament administration (room setup, procuring supplies, player check-in, adjudication, pairings, data entry, cleanup).

The team may include nongame players or members of your club. This team will help you make some of the important decisions necessary for running a good tournament and can help you with many of the details. We suggest that you also have a codirector.

Break the tasks down into manageable pieces, so it is easier to identify each person's responsibilities. Tasks can be shared among many players, allowing them all to play as well as assist in the running of the event. It is possible to both direct a tournament and play in it as long as you have another director available to handle any possible director calls that involve you as a player. Please note that your tournament performance may suffer from the distractions of directing.

V.C. Decide What Kind of Tournament

First major decisions: One-day or multiday tournament. You also need to decide whether you are running an **Open Rated Tournament (ORT)** or a **Local Club Tournament (LCT)**. NASPA will also sanction **Team Challenge and Championship (TCC)** tournaments. NASPA membership is required for all players to participate in all sanctioned tournaments, and all tournaments must be sanctioned in advance by the Tournament Committee and posted on the Tournament calendar.

Other than requiring NASPA membership, a director may impose no restrictions to entry for LCT or ORT tournaments, however, in TCC tournaments entry may be restricted by club/ region (for team challenge) or region/rating (for championships). When in doubt, contact the Tournament Committee.

There are two other subcategories of tournaments that NASPA will sanction. These are only allowed when held in conjunction with an ORT. In order to be rated there must be at least 2 rated players in each division.

1. **Newcomer Tournament.** Limited to unrated players and players under a maximum rating (e.g., 1000). Usually short—only 4 to 6 games.
2. **Youth Tournament.** Limited to players under age 18 (or whatever limit is set by the director). Usually short—only 4 to 6 games.

V.D. Event Details

V.D.1. Number of Days

If you plan a multiday event, consider that some players may have difficulty committing to more than 2 days, so you might want to break your games into separate **Early Bird, Main Event** and/or **Late Bird** events, so players can choose to play in some or all of the games. Some tournaments are actually made up of as many as 4 different events (e.g., Early Bird 1, Early Bird 2, Main Event and Late Bird). Some tournaments even offer a **"Night Bird"** event where games are played in the evening (e.g., 7 games main event during the day, then 4 games in the evening).

V.D.2. Tournament Format

The tournament format includes starting time, number of games, number of divisions, pairing system and method of adjudication (SSL and/or manual lookup).

V.D.3. Pairing System

Make sure you carefully read the descriptions of the various pairing systems, which follow in this manual.

V.D.4. Starting Times

Do you need time for opening remarks? How close are suitable restaurants for lunch breaks? How quickly will you be able to post results and determine the next round's pairings?

Long distance travelers usually like to leave early on Sunday to arrive home at a reasonable time. This may affect the Sunday start time and the number of rounds that you schedule.

V.D.5. Number of Rounds

The recent trend for weekend tournaments is 12-16 games. One-day events are usually 6-8 games. The number of games is up to the tournament organizer.

V.D.6. Method of Adjudication

Most of today's events use computer self-lookup programs. You can find a list of available Software Self-Lookup (SSL) programs on the [software page of the NASPA website](). Other directors and players can tell you which they prefer. Please remember that there may be players who will need manual adjudications due to physical limitations. Ensure that you have a person designated to handle manual adjudications.

V.D.7. Number of Divisions

Choose the number of divisions that you will have and how you will define each division. This can range from one division (an Open) to many divisions. Division types are discussed in the following section.

V.E. Other Issues

V.E.1. Announcing Details

Once you announce the details of your tournament (date, location, divisions, entry fees, etc.) you must adhere to those specifics. If unavoidable circumstances demand that you are unable to offer what you have advertised, it is important to contact the NASPA Tournament Committee as soon as possible to see if they can assist.

It is best to announce in advance as much as possible what you are sure of and add language to the announcement clarifying details that may change depending upon the number of participants. If you are unsure of a detail (e.g.,which pairing method you will use), state that it could change. Some examples:

1. Director retains the right to move entrants between divisions or merge or split divisions to maintain balance.
2. Round Robin Groups of 8-12 depending on the number of players.

V.E.2. Divisions

A few tournaments are Open (all players vie against each other in one group), but typically, tournament players are separated into divisions. Divisions are either of fixed size (so players are placed strictly by rating), or determined by ratings cutoffs.

	Advantages	Disadvantages
Open	All players have a chance to play any other player, giving ample opportunity for meeting and playing different people at different levels of expertise.	Beginners may be paired with experts, resulting in lopsided games.
Fixed Div. Size	Simplified pairings, at most one bye. Easiest to run from a director's standpoint because pairings can all be precomputed.	Limits or prevents players from playing up to a higher division. Some players will not know ahead of time which division they will be in which may negatively impact registration.
Ratings Cutoffs	Players know their division ahead of time. Directors can allow a player to play up (some tournaments allow 100-point or unlimited play-up).	Can get vastly different division sizes depending upon who signs up. Pairings can be more complicated and time consuming due to different sizes of each division.

Here are some variations available to directors:

1. **Unlimited Play-up.** Tournament uses rating cutoffs to determine divisions, but instead of the standard "may play up if within 100 pts" (see Playing Up, below), any player can play up into any higher division.

2. **Peak Rating.** Some tournament directors are allowing players to use a peak rating within a few months of the tournament date instead of their most recently published ratings. This encourages players to not "sit on their rating" to preserve it for an upcoming tournament. This also enables players to count on playing in a particular division if they have a poor performance at another event or events scheduled before yours.

3. **Premier Division.** Some tournaments have a "Premier Division" where the organizer decides in advance how many players will play in the Premier Division. Let us say it is 12. Then the 12 highest-rated players who enter the tournament are eligible to play in the Premier Division. The announcement of such a division can strongly affect the number of top players who compete. Therefore, if the organizer advertises this division, it is advised that there be no last minute changes in the number of eligible players. If you are unsure of the exact number of players for this division, make certain your advertising clearly reflects this.

V.E.3. Playing Up

Players may be allowed to play in the next higher rated division. Most directors will limit this to players within 100 points of the division rating cutoff unless they have announced

unlimited play-ups or the use of a peak rating. An exception to this is when a division has an odd number of players, and a director will move up a single player to even up the division.

V.E.4. Odd Number of Players/Byes

From NASPA Copresident and world-renowned tournament director, John Chew:

Sometimes, it's necessary to have someone sit out a round because an opponent cannot be found for them. When this happens, the player is said to have a bye (rather than a win, loss, tie or forfeit), and is credited for the purposes of pairings and standings (but not ratings) with a win and +50 points of spread.

Most pairing software will automatically choose the right player for the bye, but it is important to understand the principles involved to verify correct functioning of the software, to explain it to the players involved, and to be prepared to pair a tournament manually. Here are the principles, in decreasing order of priority.

1. If an odd number of players are Gibsonized, then the highest-ranked such player should get the bye. The principle of Gibsonization is to avoid placing a player who has nothing at stake in a game from being tempted to affect their opponent's outcome; the best way to do this is for them not to play at all.

2. Players who have already had fewer byes in the event should get byes before those who have had more. This is because most players do not like having to sit out games, so if possible everyone should have one bye before anyone gets a second one.

3. In a pairing system which a group of players are paired with each other for more than one round, the group which gets the bye should be the lowest-ranked one which has had fewer byes than any other group if this can meaningfully be determined, or a randomly chosen one if not. For example, if the pairing system requires that the field be divided in two with each group then playing an internal round robin, then all the byes for that round robin may have to take place in one group.

4. In the first round, a rated player should get a bye before an unrated player. This is to maximize the number of rated games that an unrated player plays, and the accuracy of their initial rating.

5. Lower-ranked players should get byes before higher-ranked players. This is to reduce the chance that some players who finish at the top of the field will do so solely on the basis of a bye.

It is also important to be aware of the complications that byes introduce in tournaments, to arrange events so that byes are avoided where possible and take place in the right division where possible. Again in decreasing order of priority,

1. If possible, find a player who is willing to come to the tournament but play only if needed to make the total number even. You may need to offer such a player an incentive, such as a discounted or waived entry fee.

2. If you have N players playing for R rounds, avoid having N be an odd number close to but less than R-1 (or a number whose remainder is close to but less than R-1 when divided by R); because this will result in almost but not all players receiving a bye and making it likely that the top few places will be determined by who receiving a bye and who does not.

3. If you have larger divisions and smaller divisions, make the largest possible division odd; because this will similarly keep the byes further down in the final standings.

In order to accomplish this, you should be sure to advertise in your tournament flyer that you will exercise your discretion to adjust divisions to optimize byes. Then when accepting registrations, ask players who are rated near the top of lower divisions whether they are willing to play up in the next higher division, and choose a minimal number of top-rated players to move to put the bye where necessary.

V.F. Pairings/Format

Pairings systems are used to determine how players are matched up in the tournament. You should choose a pairing system that fairly matches opponents. If there is a significant difference in the number of players in each division, you may decide to use different pairing methods for each of the different divisions.

There are several computer programs available to assist you with pairings and recording tournament results (see *"A.3.B. Tournament Software"* on page 57). This section will discuss different pairing methods and refers to the Appendix for detailed examples.

If the division size is small enough compared to the number of games being played, each player may play against every other player in the division. This format is known as **Round-Robin (RR)**. Usually, in the final game of the tournament the top finishers are paired against each other in a **King-of-the-Hill (KOTH)** format.

A Complete RR is not possible if the number of players (P) in the division exceeds the total number of games (G) by more than one (P <= G+1 for a complete RR). If your division size is less than the number of games, then you can have a complete RR followed by one or more KOTH rounds. Or the next-to-last round can be a variation on a KOTH where 1 plays 4, 2 plays 3, 5 plays 8, 7 plays 6, and so on.

When you have significantly more players than games being played a complete RR is not possible. In this situation, a combination of different pairing methods is used to match players based initially on their starting ratings (**Snake Pairings, Speed Pairings or Partial RR**), and in subsequent rounds based on their performance during the tournament (**Modified Swiss, Speed Pairings**). Ending rounds are usually **KOTH** or a **KOTH variation** concluding with a **KOTH**. Check the Pairing Systems and Pairing Tables section in the Appendix on page 43.

	Pairing Method	Description	Notes
Early rounds (usually at least 2 to 4 rounds)	Round Robin, Snake Pairings, or Speed Pairings	Pairings are computed for fixed number of rounds based on each player's starting rating, not dependent on game results.	
Middle rounds	Modified Swiss, Speed Pairings	Pairings are based on performance during tournament.	
Final round(s)	King of the Hill (KOTH)	Pairings based on results of previous round	Unless you just have enough games for a full RR, you should have at least one KOTH round at the end.

The table below gives a brief overview of the different systems.

	Description	Notes
Round Robin	Each player plays every other player or most every other player	Easy to generate pairings. All pairings can be computed at the beginning of the tournament
Swiss	Players play opponents with similar records (first round can be random or paired)	Handles any number of players in a division. Bases pairings on performance during tournament, rather than just starting rating
Snake/Speed	Subdivide division into groups and each group plays a RR	Can compute pairings for multiple rounds at a time
King of the Hill	Top ranked plays second, third plays fourth, etc. Usually used for the last round(s) of the tournament	Easy to generate
Factored Pairings	Similar to KOTH pairing players with "close" records. Usually used for round(s) preceding KOTH	Gives #3 and #4 players a somewhat better chance at ending up at #1 or #2

V.F.1. Unrated Players

Strongly encourage newcomers to attend a NASPA club to learn the mechanics of official play and ask them to read the *Official Tournament Rules*. Many newcomers have played extensively online, but are not prepared to compute scores, track their opponent's score, draw tiles, track tiles, use the clock etc. The more comfortable they are with simple game procedures, the better their tournament experience will be.

If the newcomer lives near to a club, suggest he/she attend at least one club session (or try to arrange for a private game session) before entering a tournament. Even one session will demonstrate if the player is ready for a tournament. It will be much better for all involved for that realization to take place in a casual or club setting rather than in a tournament.

If you are contacted by a player who has never come to a tournament, be sure the player understands his/her commitments before registration. Some people may not realize that they are expected to play every game in the tournament, believing that they can be eliminated early. It is a good idea to hand out copies of NASPA's Newcomers Handout to new players when they arrive or, if possible, beforehand.

If you do not accept walk-in entries, please make sure all your advertising and pre-event materials make that clear. Unrated players are usually placed in the bottom division. **You must have at least two rated players** in each division for NASPA rate it. Ideally, you should strive to have no more than 50% of the players unrated within a single division, so please keep this in mind when forming your divisions.

One way to handle a situation where you have a lot of unrated players at the bottom is to merge the two bottom divisions, and then split them into "A" and "B" halves alternating players by rating.

With the advent of computer study tools and online play, some players new to the SCRABBLE tournament scene are quite skilled at the game, so a director may choose to place an unrated player in a higher division. Before moving him/her up to a higher division, try to observe his/her play against rated players.

Note that this could be problematic with other players if your tournament has fixed division sizes as an unrated player would then displace a rated player. Again, announce your policy in advance (e.g., "Unrated players will be placed at the director's discretion").

V.F.2. Announce the Pairing System

In a rated tournament, players want a pairing system that will quickly determine individual matches and more experienced players want to know in advance how directors will pair them. In order to attract players from many areas and keep them returning year after year, your reputation as a director is important.

V.F.3. Repeat Pairings

Repeat pairings allow for players to play the same player more than once. Announce under what conditions there will be repeat pairings, and if you are using the Gibson Rule (page 54).

V.G. Tournament Software

If you have a one-day tournament with fixed division sizes, use Round Robin pairings and post results on a wall chart, you do not necessarily need tournament software. However, for longer tournaments with more players and more complicated pairings systems, computer assistance is essential to a smoothly run tournament. See Tournament Software in Appendix (page 57)

V.H. Long-range Planning/Tasks

The following are the steps that you should take to conduct a successful SCRABBLE tournament:

Note: while we list "Select the Date(s)" and "Secure the Playing Venue" as separate steps, in reality you should contact NASPA with a proposed date to make sure it does not conflict with other nearby tournaments while you are in the process of securing your venue. It is best to not sign a contract with the venue until NASPA has sanctioned your event.

V.H.1. Select the Date(s)

For an Open Rated Tournament (ORT) or a Team Challenge Competition (TCC) you must apply to NASPA for sanctioning no later than 6 weeks in advance so that they can verify that there are no tournaments that conflict with your event. You may apply for a date as much as 2 years in advance. Scheduling restrictions are listed below:

1. No other multiday tournaments occurring within two weekends and 200 miles of your proposed tournament (however a one-day tournament may be separated by just one week from a multiday tournament).

   Exception: if the organizers of the conflicting tournaments are agreeable, NASPA can sanction both.

2. No other one-day tournament on same day within 100 miles.

By doing some preliminary review of the Tournament Calendar, you can see what is already scheduled and if your proposed date(s) qualify.

Three-day holiday weekends are popular for multiday events. Consider a non-holiday weekend for a one-day or a new event.

Although 6-weeks advance notice is sufficient to have your tournament sanctioned, many directors allow a considerably longer amount of time to properly plan and market the event, many directors/organizers allowing for 6 months to a year, or even longer, in advance.

Advantages of long-range planning:

1. NASPA and you will have more time to publicize your event on the NASPA Tournament Calendar, on NASPA's Facebook page, on cross-tables.com and in local media.

2. Players from other areas of the country and beyond can use the advance notice to make travel arrangements.

3. You can often secure a more cost effective deal for event space.

Once you have decided on dates, contact the NASPA Tournament Committee (naspa-tourney@yahoogroups.com) to have your event sanctioned and listed on the NASPA Tournament Calendar which is linked and updated to cross-tables.com automatically.

Because different directors in nearby areas may want to schedule a tournament on the same weekend, NASPA has put in specific guidelines for applying for a date or dates. Please consult those guidelines when preparing your application.

V.H.2. Secure the Playing Venue

Once you have verified the acceptable date(s) for your event with NASPA, you can decide which location would be best.

Most tournaments are funded solely from entry fees, though some are subsidized by local club members or sponsorship by local businesses. Decide what you can afford to spend on a venue based on your entry fees and anticipated attendance.

Typical locations for SCRABBLE tournaments are hotels, park and recreation community activity centers, schools and shopping malls.

Hotels – Hotels are ideal places for tournaments as they often have meeting space plus offer immediate access to meals and lodging. When first contacting a hotel, ask for the hotel's group sales department. Different hotels charge different rates at various times of the year based upon their supply and demand. Although weekends are typically less expensive than weekdays, certain times of the year draw other events to the hotel. If you look for dates when your city does not draw a lot of outside visitors, hotels will welcome the business and you can negotiate a better deal.

Most hotels will charge a fee for meeting space unless your players fill a minimum number of room nights during the event. On average, you should not count on more than 30% of your players staying at the hotel, so try to negotiate as low a minimum of room nights as possible; otherwise you may be financially responsible for the difference. This is called "attrition". Directors often charge Commuters (those not staying at the host hotel) a "commuter fee" or "facility fee" to help defray the cost of the facility and to discourage them from staying elsewhere.

One negotiating tool to use with hotels is called a "sliding scale rate". In this format, you can negotiate a certain amount of money per room night sold going towards paying for the facility with the end result being that the facility could end up being free.

Another negotiating tool is to purchase/cater meals from the hotel and make those meals part of your tournament package. Hotels will often apply a certain credit for catering to go towards the rental of the playing space.

To encourage players to stay at the host hotel, you should try to negotiate a discounted hotel rate for the players or package deals offering special breakfast and dinner rates. Check hotel rates with discount booking agencies on the Internet to determine low rates being offered by a hotel.

Try to put into your contract that the hotel agrees that if people from your group book their hotel reservations in ways other than going through your block, that those sold rooms count toward your room night commitment.

You might also ask the sales department if they offer SMERF (Social, Military, Educational, Religious and Fraternal) rates. SMERF rates are often less expensive than general public rates. Also, you can get rate quotes by contacting a city's Convention and Visitor's Bureau (CVB); most cities have CVB websites.

Try to have a special reservation code for your players who are making reservations at the host hotel. This will make sure that players get any advertised discounted rate and help identify players who should count toward a room night commitment. Some hotels will provide your event with a special link that you can include on your advertising.

Park & Recreation/Community Activity Centers – These facilities are typically less expensive during those times of the year that they are less in demand. Factor the cost of renting the facility into your entry fee.

Schools – The advantage of approaching schools or universities is the likelihood of abundant available space during the holidays and summers. Some universities have short-term lodging available as well.

Shopping Malls – To find out about using shopping mall facilities, go to the sales office. By distributing a flyer with the names of the stores supporting your event, you may be able to trade the use of their space for advertising the various shops at that shopping center. Often stores can support you by providing gift certificates.

Whatever type of playing location that you choose please keep the following in mind:

Contracts – If you must sign a contract, get as many of the details as possible (table sizes, floor diagrams, audio rental, cancellation policy, etc.) written into your contract.

Lodging – If you are not playing in a hotel, provide players with a list available of nearby lodging and prices (try to negotiate group rates with those properties). Perhaps

your local players may be amenable to help with lodging and local transportation to help defray expenses and make your event more appealing.

Lay of the Land – What is the event location's address and telephone number? How far is the playing location from the airport, train station or nearby hotels? Is there a shuttle service? Is there free parking? If not, what are the parking rates? Is there Internet access at the hotel or playing site? What restaurants are in the area? How should players contact you (phone number and email address)?

Square Footage – Players need elbow room while playing and space to walk and talk while awaiting the next round. Make sure that the tournament room can accommodate a turnout somewhat larger than you expect. Allow at least 25-30 square feet per player. When you talk to the venue's representative, be sure to tell them how many square feet you need—not how many people will be there. Typical non-SCRABBLE events require much less space per person and event planners will underestimate how much space you need.

Tables – Typical banquet tables will have dimensions of 6' x 30" to 8' x 36". Request the larger tables as early as possible. Some hotels may try to put two smaller tables together. This is not best for the players as the tables tend to be uneven resulting in an uneven playing board. If you are using Software Self-Lookups (SSL), make sure that the computers are located in places easily accessible to all players.

Lighting – Test all areas of the playing facility to ensure proper lighting. Set up a board and tiles at various locations of the proposed meeting space and check for illumination, glare and other factors that affect vision.

Water and Snacks – You should arrange for a continuous supply of drinking water and/or the availability of coffee, tea, soft drinks and snacks for purchase.

Restrooms – Identify and inform your players of the locations of all restrooms.

Accessible Facilities – Always make sure that the space has the necessary extras for physically challenged players. Federal law requires handicapped access at most facilities, and you should publish that accessibility in your flyers and in your details to be advertised by NASPA.

Electrical Outlets – Check for enough outlets for your directing equipment. If extension cords and/or power strips are needed, ask if there are extra charges for these or plan to bring your own.

Public Address System – Check to see if you require one and whether there is an additional charge.

Pairings/Results Posting – Ask if you can attach items to the walls (important for posting pairings/results). Some facilities allow only a certain type of tape or only a limited area for postings; if so, consider borrowing or renting a standing bulletin board.

Insurance - Many of these locations may require insurance. In days gone by, most facilities provided this. Now, more are asking the renter to provide liability insurance. NASPA's liability insurance policy (a copy of NASPA's proof of insurance is available in the Director section of Member Services) provides coverage for our members participating in sanctioned tournaments and clubs. NASPA can add a specific entity as an additional insured to its policy for a minimum of one year. The cost for this is $150.

V.H.3. Determine Your Entry Fees

When deciding on an entry fee, keep in mind the overall expenses that your players are likely to incur to get to and attend your event plus your overall expenses in planning and running the event. You may also want to consider what other directors are charging for entries as a comparison. Also determine whether you want to have a flat rate entry fee or if you want to charge different rates for different divisions. Tournament organizers typically charge late fees and commuter/facility fees for those who wish to register beyond a specific deadline and for those not staying at the host hotel. Consider offering discounts to those who register early. This incentive can help you determine your estimated number of attendees much earlier.

Some organizers use scholarships or sponsorships to defray a portion of the entry fee for those students or others who may not be able to afford a typical entry fee.

V.H.4. Publicizing Your Event

Once your tournament is sanctioned, the NASPA website will include your tournament on its tournament calendar. This is then uplinked to cross-tables.com automatically. Other publicity might include local press, direct mail, direct email and current SCRABBLE-related online discussion forums (naspa-pro, naspa-tcd, NASPA's Facebook page).

Please be aware that news media often need lead time to feature a story about your event. You should write and send out a press release at least 6-8 weeks in advance to have the best chance for publicity.

Also consider mailing printed flyers to nearby clubs and send email notification to previous attendees to let them know about your event. It is a good idea to send out additional emails a few times before the entry deadlines as a reminder.

V.I. Mid-Range Planning

V.I.1. Managing Entrants

As entries come in for your tournament, keep track of who has signed up, what they have paid, which division they are requesting, etc. The can be charted easily on cross-tables.com with a tentative listing for those unpaid changed to confirmed status upon registration. It is a good idea to deposit entry fee checks as you get them—you do not want to wait until just before the tournament to find out that a check has been returned unpaid. Check the NASPA

membership status for all players as you sign them up so you can alert anyone who needs to renew or join well ahead of the tournament (cross-tables will highlight or comment on those players whose memberships should be checked).

Verify that the name a player uses on their entry matches exactly the name they use with NASPA. Make sure that entrants who claim this is their first tournament do not have an established rating from a previous NASPA or NSA tournament. Ratings never "expire" even if it has been years (or decades) since the last tournament.

V.I.1.a. Maintaining a List of Players

Keep an updated list of registrants. Other players (and prospective entrants) like to see who is coming to your tournament. Cross-tables.com provides a tool to track your entrants.

V.I.2. Practice Using Your Tournament Software

If you are using tournament software, it is critical for you and your team to familiarize yourselves with the program. Set up and run a small test division so you know how to generate pairings, enter game results, print pairings, etc. Be sure you know how to handle special cases like byes, forfeits, and the Gibson Rule. In Member Services, Director Services section of the website, you can test sending in results with the "Submit Ratings (Test)" link.

V.I.2.a. Gather Equipment

Get all the equipment and supplies you plan to use at the tournament (computer, printer, ink, etc.) and make sure they are compatible. This little extra work in advance will ensure a smoothly run tournament.

V.J. Finalize Tournament Details

In what follows, John Chew has provided a timetable list of items to make yourself ready to run your event.

V.J.1. At Least 6 Weeks Before (Three or More Months Recommended)

At this point, you should have:
- X   Chosen a date checking for conflict with local events, religious holidays
- X   Applied for and received sanctioning for your tournament with NASPA
- X   Booked your venue and inspected it to make sure it is suitable
- X   Decided on a schedule. Consider how many 60-minute rounds (50 minutes game time + 10 minutes for break between rounds), how many 7- or 8-round days, start times, lunch breaks, etc.
- X   Chosen a tournament structure (Round-Robin, Swiss or other)
- X   Decided how much entry fees will be

X   Printed and distributed tournament flyers

X   Recruited your key team members (codirectors, data entry)

X   Set up a listing for your tournament to list registrants on cross-tables.com, including a link to a flyer or your tournament website.

X   Set up a tournament website, including a copy of your flyer and a list of registrants. A tournament website is not a must, but a lot of players find it convenient, and it may prevent you from repeatedly answering some common questions.

V.J.2. One Month Before

At this point, you should have:

X   Recruited all of your team

X   Sourced a word judge laptop and software (at least one per 100 players, plus a spare)

X   Had at least one planning meeting with your team to make sure that everyone knows what they are doing

X   Decided on color-coding for divisions to facilitate paperwork

X   Decided on a catering menu, if you are providing meals or refreshments

X   Drawn up a draft budget

V.J.3. One Week Before

At this point, you should have:

X   Bought any nonperishable catering supplies. Please note: For obvious reasons, many hotels will not allow food from outside of the hotel

X   Decide whether to require cash if you allow entries at the door

X   Obtained all the other supplies that you will need for the event including scoresheets, tally sheets, player scorecards, etc. See John Chew's "How to Direct a SCRABBLE Tournament" for suggestions on how many of each you should print

X   Confirmed with your venue and gotten an after-hours and emergency contact phone number for your liaison

X   Announced that registration is closed except possibly to a player willing to come as an alternate to even the field or a division. NOTE: For one-day tournaments registration usually stays open until the day before or day of the event. This is up to the director

X   Secured any prizes you wish to award (trophies, plaques, certificates, etc.)

X   Tested your computer(s) & printer(s) with the tournament software

V.J.4. One Day Before

At this point, you should have:

Ⅹ   Double-checked everything in this checklist

Ⅹ   Moved anything that you can to the venue, if the site is secure

Ⅹ   Reread the *Official Tournament Rules*

Ⅹ   Set up tournament data files (preprint pairings assuming all players check in)

Ⅹ   Chosen your wardrobe: your most comfortable shoes and layers of clothing to deal with air conditioning or excessive heat and alternately sitting at a computer for long periods and running the length of a tournament room

Ⅹ   Checked for any local circumstances that might affect the ability of players to reach your tournament site: inclement weather, road closures, parades, transit strikes

Ⅹ   Caught up on your sleep

V.J.4.a. Precompute Pairings for the First Few Rounds

If you are holding a tournament where players are required to preregister, it is recommended to generate and print pairings for the first round (more if possible) before the tournament. You should not post the pairings until you have confirmed that all your players are in attendance, but once done, this allows you to start games promptly. It is also a good backup in case you have power or computer problems.

Many directors post only the pairings for the first round and then post pairings for subsequent rounds once the first games have commenced. This reduces congestion at the pairings posting area and gets the first game started more quickly. If possible, post the pairings outside of the playing area, so that ongoing games have minimal distractions.

If you are using software to administer your tournament (see table on page 57), the pairings can be printed directly from the computer and then posted.

If you are not using software, Round Robin pairings may be easily displayed using the appropriate table on page 43. Simply copy the table and post to the wall. Give each player in each division a number from one to X (x = # of players in the division) and the table will tell them exactly who they play each round. It is also a good idea to number each division.

For example, with 6 divisions of 16 players each, there will be 6 #1s. To distinguish them, label the players in DIV. 1 from 101 to 116, DIV. 2 would have 201-216, or A1-A16, B1-B16, or other division designation system. Later, as you prepare to send the results to NASPA, drop the 1st digits and follow directions described in **"After the Tournament... Send results to NASPA"** (see also *"V.L.1. Send Results to NASPA"* on page 39).

V.K. At the Tournament

V.K.1. One Hour Before

At this point, you should have:

- The venue completely set up for the tournament:
    - ° Signage and wall-charts posted
    - ° Sheets posted for players to list special category prizes such as high game, high play, etc.
    - ° Word judge computers set up
    - ° Tables and chairs in place
    - ° Team table (and computers) out and ready
    - ° Table numbers placed on tables
    - ° Tally slips, blank designation slips and challenge slips placed on the tables
    - ° A few sets of *Official Tournament Rules* available
    - ° The starting times prominently posted on the players' scorecards or at the doors
    - ° Pairings posted outside the playing room, so players in between games will be less of a disturbance to those still playing.
- Everything ready to start tournament check-in:
    - ° Scorecards laid out in alphabetical order ready for players to pick up
    - ° Cash box setup
    - ° NASPA renewal forms available
    - ° Computers on and working
    - ° Labels available so players can mark their equipment if necessary
    - ° Have available **"10 things for Newcomers to Know"**

For a recommended list of tournament supplies, look in the Appendix on page 56.

V.K.2. On-Site Player Check-In

It is good to allow an hour for check-in for every hundred registrants, longer if you allow walk-ins. The registrars should check people off their registration lists and collect any fees owed. They should ask players to pick up their scorecard and nametags if provided. As soon as all the players for each division are present, the director should be informed.

V.K.2.a. Check and Collect Membership Dues

You should check the membership status of all players during the week before the tournament and collect any unpaid membership fees at registration. Announce clearly in your advertising that rated players must be NASPA members. You may check player membership at the NASPA online membership database. When you submit your results you will be billed for these memberships so it is wise to require checks made out and mailed to NASPA or cash if you are going to charge the membership fees to your credit card.

> **Unrated First-Time Players:** First-time players who are not yet rated may opt for NASPA's Trial Membership (half price for 6 months) or can become full members of NASPA.

> **Unrated Experienced Players:** Occasionally, someone who has played in tournaments in other countries may want to enter your tournament. You should ask what their rating is in their home country, then contact the NASPA Tournament Committee to establish if they have a NASPA rating for the player so you can comfortably place that player in the proper division. These players must also join NASPA, but may take advantage of the 6-month introductory membership if they choose. NASPA now also has reciprocal membership agreements with many of the world's SCRABBLE organizations. Alert NASPA and we will assign those players a NASPA membership number.

> **Rated Players:** NASPA requires that all players who are rated keep their NASPA membership current in order to play in sanctioned tournaments. The director is responsible for remitting this fee. Check to make sure you have each player's name spelled exactly as it is listed on the NASPA website as well as their current NASPA Membership number.

V.K.2.b. Double-check Your Divisions and Pairings

After check-in, you may need to quickly adjust your divisions and pairings for any no-shows or additional players (i.e., alternate or standby players you have).

Now you can post/announce the pairings.

V.K.3. Opening Ceremony

Thank the players for coming.

Introduce your team and thank them publicly.

Remind players of the schedule and where it is posted.

Ensure all players have the necessary equipment; if you have not printed it in your advertising, announce that equipment should not be moved between rounds.

Keep your announcements to a minimum. Try to make them at the beginning of a session rather than at the end.

V.K.4. Middle of the Tournament

Now that the tournament has started, you will primarily be dealing with director's calls, computer/data work and administration.

Check to see that the playing tables are furnished with blank/challenge/tally slips. See if the tables need to be refreshed with new slips before each session.

Director calls are critical, and it is important to get the issue correct. You should have several copies of the *Official Tournament Rules* in the playing room, and refer to it for any questionable situation. If there are situations which are not mentioned in the rules book, confer with other certified directors who may be at your tournament. Use all assets at your disposal to make the best ruling of a situation that you can. You are the director. Your decision is final.

V.K.5. End of Tournament

The primary work at the end of the tournament is to collect properly filled out score-cards and determine the winners and determine special category winners, such as high game scores, high plays, etc. (these are not mandatory). Some computer programs can also generate these for you if you plan in advance.

Ask committee members and volunteers to assist you in packing up all the event materials. You can sort it later.

Make sure to close out the room properly and collect all your supplies. It is always wise to have your event contact come check the room before you leave, so there are no misunderstandings about how it is left.

You may leave lost and found articles with the hotel or take them with you and see if anyone claims them.

V.L. After the Tournament

V.L.1. Send Results to NASPA

V.L.1.a. Generate Tournament Data for NASPA

NASPA expects results to be submitted electronically and in a specific format. The programs "tsh" and "Director!", will create files in the correct format. Specifics about how to generate the data in the correct format are posted in the Appendix: *"A.3.C. Tournament Data Submission Formats"* on page 59.

Information about these programs is available on the NASPA website on the Directors Page. Using an appropriate tournament pairing program to run your tournament eliminates any need to manually generate tournament results for submission. The programs do it for you if the results have been entered accurately.

V.L.1.b. Submit Data

Once your results file is ready, submit the file at the NASPA website: http://www. scrabbleplayers.org/cgi-bin/submit-rdata.pl

Until your results are fully rated and verified by NASPA, keep all your original tally slips and paperwork as a backup. If you have the originals, you can reconstruct the results by hand even in the event of the most catastrophic computer failure.

V.L.1.c. Remit Participation Fees

NASPA charges the player a Participation Fee of **$0.50 per game** (only games that are actually begun are subject to charge – byes and forfeits of games not started are not charged) and bills those charges to the director for remittance. We recommend that you incorporate this fee into the entry fee charged for your tournament. Results must be received by NASPA no later than 2 weeks after the last day of your event, otherwise an additional $0.25 will be added per player, per game. Though NASPA recommends and appreciates immediate remittance of Participation Fees, all collected Participation Fees must be remitted within 2 weeks. A 2% per month (or part of a month) service charge will be added to amounts due after this time.

V.L.2. Post Results to Players

In addition to sending results to NASPA, you might want to send final results to your players and post them to the online discussion groups. NASPA recommends that you and all of your players join naspa-pro. This is NASPA's official Yahoo group for player discussions. Join by sending a blank email to naspa-pro-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

Additional tournament-related material, such as photos, anecdotes, and possible records or special plays can be emailed or mailed to NASPA to be published on its website. Label all photos clearly with names and dates and note they cannot be returned. Digital photos should be in a high DPI format.

Generally, tournament results submitted to NASPA will be rated within a few days and will show up on the NASPA website soon thereafter. They will also appear on cross-tables.com within an hour of final tabulations.

V.L.3. Pay Outstanding Bills

Now it is time to close out your financial obligations. Many venues require a credit card on file for booking and will charge you after your event ends. There may also be surcharges, taxes, and gratuities. This should be in your contract paperwork, so double-check to be sure. Please note that you should already be aware of most of these details from your negotiations. If there is any doubt, request a detailed statement from your catering company or from the venue.

If you employed paid assistants at your tournament, they should be paid promptly after the event is over.

V.L.4. Compute Final Balance Sheet for Tournament Expenses

Check your budget against the actual expenses you incurred.

V.L.5. Conduct a Postmortem with Your Team

It is over! And, it is never too early to start planning for the next event. After a National Championship, NASPA always asks their team to submit five (5) suggestions for improving the event. Often the suggestions are minor details, but can really make a difference.

The first step toward making this happen is to go over what you have already done and learn from the experience. Try to set up a meeting with your tournament team a week or so after the event is over. This gives everyone enough time to recuperate, but a short enough time so that everything is still fresh in their minds. While this is not an all-inclusive list, some possible items to address are:

General impressions. Was the event a success? If not, what can be done to make the next one a success?

High and low points. What went right and wrong at the tournament? For those things that went wrong, how were they handled during the event and how can they be improved next time?

Actual versus expected attendance. Did another event – not necessarily related to SCRABBLE – affect your attendance? Did you have many more players than you expected? Was your playing area too large or too small for the crowd you drew? If this was not your first event, did attendance increase or decrease, and why?

Income and expenses vs. budget. How much was spent? How much money came in? Was there a profit, and if so, what should be done with it? How did these numbers compare with what was budgeted?

Venue. Was the playing room presented as promised by your contract? Was the room comfortable? Were there any issues not related to your event (ancillary noises from other events) that had an impact on the venue and how were they perceived by your players? Were the charges in line with your contract?

Appendix

A.I. Pairing Systems and Pairing Tables

The following are all acceptable pairing methods for NASPA events. Each has its benefits so familiarize yourself with each of them and read section *"V.F. Pairings/Format"* on page 26 for an explanation of how to choose which pairing methods to use in your tournament.

A.I.A. Round-Robin Pairings

The key factor in Round-Robin (RR) pairings is that all players play every other player within their division or in some cases almost every other player.

1. In a ten-round tournament, if there are ten or fewer players in a division, they can each play every other player once or twice. Twelve people can play a Round Robin of 11 rounds. Six or eight people can play a Round Robin of 5 or 7 rounds.

2. You may divide a large group of players into smaller groups, putting the highest rated players into the top group, the next highest rated players in the next group, and so on until the lowest rated and/or unrated players are in the last group.

Example: Some tournaments have often been paired in Round-Robin fashion in groups of 20, 22 or 24 players. The format has worked well, especially for the 18-24. In order to pair the entire event, the director only has to assign each player a number and post the Round-Robin pairing schedule for all to see.

Note: If you want to use Round Robin pairings, but you have too many players in a division, there is a good compromise. They may be 24 players in a division and only 18 rounds. The directors make sure that while they use a 24-player Round-Robin schedule, they only use 18 of the scheduled rounds. However, all of the top 7-8 rated players wind up playing each other during the event. This ensures that the most likely winners do not finish the tournament with, for example, a 15-3 record having not played most of the top 6 players. Another special case is handled by the John Green System on page 47.

Note, however, that incomplete Round Robins have drawn criticism because they do not guarantee that the eventual contenders have played each other, or played comparable opponents. So, consider using Swiss Pairings (described on page 52) in those situations.

Round-by-Round Pairings by player number.

4 Players

Plyr. # Rd	1	2	3
#1	4	3	2
#2	3	4	1
#3	2	1	4
#4	1	2	3

6 Players

Plyr. # Rd	1	2	3	4	5
#1	6	5	4	3	2
#2	5	3	6	4	1
#3	4	2	5	1	6
#4	3	6	1	2	5
#5	2	1	3	6	4
#6	1	4	2	5	3

8 Players

Plyr. # Rd	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
#1	8	7	6	5	4	3	2
#2	7	5	3	8	6	4	1
#3	6	4	2	7	5	1	8
#4	5	3	8	6	1	2	7
#5	4	2	7	1	3	8	6
#6	3	8	1	4	2	7	5
#7	2	1	5	3	8	6	4
#8	1	6	4	2	7	5	3

10 Players

Plyr. # Rd	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
#1	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2
#2	9	7	5	3	10	8	6	4	1
#3	8	6	4	2	9	7	5	1	10
#4	7	5	3	10	8	6	1	2	9
#5	6	4	2	9	7	1	3	10	8
#6	5	3	10	8	1	4	2	9	7
#7	4	2	9	1	5	3	10	8	6
#8	3	10	1	6	4	2	9	7	5
#9	2	1	7	5	3	10	8	6	4
#10	1	8	6	4	2	9	7	5	3

12 Players

Plyr.#Rd.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
#1:	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2
#2:	11	9	7	5	3	12	10	8	6	4	1
#3:	10	8	6	4	2	11	9	7	5	1	12
#4:	9	7	5	3	12	10	8	6	1	2	11
#5:	8	6	4	2	11	9	7	1	3	12	10
#6:	7	5	3	12	10	8	1	4	2	11	9
#7:	6	4	2	11	9	1	5	3	12	10	8
#8:	5	3	12	10	1	6	4	2	11	9	7
#9:	4	2	11	1	7	5	3	12	10	8	6
#10:	3	12	1	8	6	4	2	11	9	7	5
#11:	2	1	9	7	5	3	12	10	8	6	4
#12:	1	10	8	6	4	2	11	9	7	5	3

14 Players

Plyr.#Rd.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
#1	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2
#2	13	11	9	7	5	3	14	12	10	8	6	4	1
#3	12	10	8	6	4	2	13	11	9	7	5	1	14
#4	11	9	7	5	3	14	12	10	8	6	1	2	13
#5	10	8	6	4	2	13	11	9	7	1	3	14	12
#6	9	7	5	3	14	12	10	8	1	4	2	13	11
#7	8	6	4	2	13	11	9	1	5	3	14	12	10
#8	7	5	3	14	12	10	1	6	4	2	13	11	9
#9	6	4	2	13	11	1	7	5	3	14	12	10	8
#10	5	3	14	12	1	8	6	4	2	13	11	9	7
#11	4	2	13	1	9	7	5	3	14	12	10	8	6
#12	3	14	1	10	8	6	4	2	13	11	9	7	5
#13	2	1	11	9	7	5	3	14	12	10	8	6	4
#14	1	12	10	8	6	4	2	13	11	9	7	5	3

16 Players

Plyr.#Rd.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
#1	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2
#2	15	13	11	9	7	5	3	16	14	12	10	8	6	4	1
#3	14	12	10	8	6	4	2	15	13	11	9	7	5	1	16
#4	13	11	9	7	5	3	16	14	12	10	8	6	1	2	15
#5	12	10	8	6	4	2	15	13	11	9	7	1	3	16	14
#6	11	9	7	5	3	16	14	12	10	8	1	4	2	15	13
#7	10	8	6	4	2	15	13	11	9	7	5	3	16	14	12
#8	9	7	5	3	16	14	12	10	1	6	4	2	15	13	11
#9	8	6	4	2	15	13	11	1	7	5	3	16	14	12	10
#10	7	5	3	16	14	12	1	8	6	4	2	15	13	11	9
#11	6	4	2	15	13	1	9	7	5	3	16	14	12	10	8
#12	5	3	16	14	1	10	8	6	4	2	15	13	11	9	7
#13	4	2	15	1	11	9	7	5	3	16	14	12	10	8	6
#14	3	16	1	12	10	8	6	4	2	15	13	11	9	7	5
#15	2	1	13	11	9	7	5	3	16	14	12	10	8	6	4
#16	1	14	12	10	8	6	4	2	15	13	11	9	7	5	3

A.1.A.a. Berger System (R-R): A specific way to generate the Round-Robin Pairings

The preceding schedules of play were calculated using a system designed by Johann Berger in the 19th century. The advantage of this system is that it can be used to easily and quickly generate round robin pairings for any even numbered group.

The player numbers are written out in two lines (the first half left to right and the bottom half right to left), and the top line of numbers is paired against the bottom line of numbers. For each successive round, keep #1 stationary while moving everyone else clockwise around the circle. Berger's original design was counterclockwise. Either way is fine.

See the table below for an example with just 16 players. Notice that player #1 remains in the same position, as the other players rotate clockwise.

Round 1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9
Round 2	1	16	2	3	4	5	6	7
	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8
Round 3	1	15	16	2	3	4	5	6
	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7

To calculate pairings for groups of more than 16 players (X= #of players) simply start with the first round as:

1	2	3	X/2
X	X-1	X-2	X/2 +1

The above indicates that #1 plays #X, #2 plays #X-1...#X/2 plays #X/2+1.

For the following rounds, keep #1 stationary while moving everyone else clockwise around the circle.

Refer back to the tables starting on page 43 for a complete listing of Round Robin pairings for up to 16 players.

A.1.A.b. John Green System (RR/KOH) A special case for 7 players in a 6-game tournament

Normally in odd divisions with more players than rounds, byes are assigned to the bottom seeds, thus none of the top players who are likely to have had byes. This breaks down in seven player divisions playing five Round Robin rounds and one King of the Hill (KOTH) round where six of the seven players will receive a bye. If the first five byes are given to the five lowest seed players then the sixth bye will be given to one of the top two seeds.

In 1998 John Green introduced the following innovation: The first five byes were assigned to the top five seeds. The sixth bye was assigned to whichever of the bottom two seeds had the poorer record through the first five rounds.

A full seven round Round Robin schedule by Berger Table pairings is:

Rd 1:	1-BYE	2-2	3-6	4-5
Rd 2:	1-2	3-BYE	4-7	5-6
Rd 3:	1-3	2-4	5-BYE	6-7
Rd 4:	1-4	2-6	3-5	7-BYE
Rd 5:	1-5	2-BYE	3-7	4-6
Rd 6:	1-6	2-3	4-BYE	5-7
Rd 7:	1-7	2-5	3-4	6-BYE

But, since we are pairing only a five round RR we must eliminate two of the above rounds. Standard Pairings would eliminate the ones that give byes to the first seed (Round 1) and to the second seed (Round 5). In the John Green System the rounds to be eliminated are the ones that give byes to the sixth seed (Round 7) and to the seventh seed (Round 4).

Note that this assures that if there are two unrated players, the two of them combined are guaranteed to play 11 games between them vs. only 10 with Standard Pairings (preferable because having unrated players play more games will give more accuracy to their initial ratings). Note that this also assures that both of the top two seeds will receive a bye.

The five rounds from the above Berger Table pairings used in the John Green System are:

Rd 1:	1-BYE	2-7	3-6	4-5
Rd 2:	1-2	3-BYE	4-7	5-6
Rd 3:	1-3	2-4	5-BYE	6-7
Rd 4:	1-5	2-BYE	3-7	4-6
Rd 5:	1-6	2-3	4-BYE	5-7

The sixth round, being KOTH, is not shown.

A.1.A.c. Boustrophedon (Snake) Pairings

If you want to pair RR, but have too many players in a division, then an appropriate compromise is the Boustrophedon (Snake) Pairings System. For instance, if you have 36 players for a 14 round tourney, using the Snake pairings will give all of the players a fair chance.

For the first 11 rounds, the 36 players are divided by rating into three smaller groups of 12 players in the following "snakelike" fashion. #1 represents the highest-rated player, #2 the 2nd highest-rated player, etc.

Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
1	2	3
6	5	4
7	8	9
12	11	10
13	14	15
18	17	16
19	20	21
24	23	22
25	26	27
30	29	28
31	32	33
36	35	34

The purpose of dividing the whole division in this manner is so that each group of 12 has approximately the same average rating.

After your series of Snake Pairings you will likely choose KOTH or Factored Pairings to complete your tournament. See an example of how these pairings systems were used at National Championship tournaments in A.1.B.a on page 51.

A.1.A.d. Split Round-Robin

Similar to Snake pairings, but after you split the division into two groups you have the groups play a full Round Robin against players in the opposing group instead of among themselves. Split Round-Robin should be used to allow precomputed pairings for a good portion of the games when the group is too large to allow for a full Round Robin. The number of games in a split RR is equal to half the size of the division.

Example of 16 players in a division that will play 12 games:

Group 1	Group 2
1	2
4	3
5	6
8	7
9	10
12	11
13	14
16	15

Games 1-8 are paired ahead, so each player in Group 1 will play every player in Group 2 (and vice versa). The last four games could be paired using one of the methods below:

1. Using the results of round 8, create groups of 4 based on ranking and have each group play a full round robin (3 games). The last game is a King of Hill match.

2. Use Swiss pairings for rounds 9-11. The last game is a King of Hill match.

Here is another example for the same division of 16, playing 12 games, that makes use of split RR pairings. It has the advantage of no repeats until the final round, and pits leaders against leaders:

1. Separate into two groups of 8 using the snake method. Have each subgroup play a full RR within that group. (7 games), [games 1-7]

2. Using the results after game 7, take the top 4 in the first group and pair them against the top 4 in the second group for a full RR (4 games), and the same for the bottom half in each group. [games 8-11]

3. Finish with one KOTH round (the first opportunity for repeats). [game 12]

Another example uses a group of 28 players, playing 20 games:

1. Split RR for first 14 games

2. Separate again into groups of 4 based on ranking as a result of game 14, and play a complete RR in each group (games 15-17)

3. Repeat step 2 using rankings after game 17. For most dramatic finish, RR games should be played in the following order:

   Round 18: 1 v. 4, 2 v. 3

   Round 19: 1 v. 3, 2 v. 4

   Round 20: 1 v. 2, 3 v. 4

A.1.B. Factored Pairings

Factored Pairings are used toward the end of the tournament, before a final KOTH round. Factored Pairings (FP) are the same as KOTH except that the optimum rank separation of players is some fixed number (the factor) greater than the value of one used in KOTH.

Using **Factored Pairings** (in groups of 4), otherwise written "FP4" in the penultimate round, pairs each group of four players beginning with the leaders of the division as: 1-3, 2-4, 5-7, 6-8.etc. based upon standing at that round. In a tournament, the final three rounds could be FP6 (1-4, 2-5, 3-6) , FP4 (1-3, 2-4...) and KOTH (1-2, 3-4...), with repeat and even multiple repeat pairings allowed for the last round.

Note: Factored Pairings at the end of a tourney make it more exciting for the #3 and #4 players because it gives them a somewhat better chance to end up in the #1 or #2 positions. And likewise, it gives #7 and #8 a better chance to finish 5th or 6th, and so on. The name Factored Pairings came about because the whole division is factored by a number (in this case 4) and then divided into groups with that number (4) of players from the top on down.

A version of FP is used in the NSC in preliminary rounds, with factors gradually decreasing from 20 to 2, to artificially control the rate at which the contender pool shrinks. (At the NSC, pairing is done in groups of four to eight players, three or four rounds at a time.)

A.1.B.a. Example Pairings from Previous National SCRABBLE Championships

For the first 11 rounds, the 36 players were divided by rating into three smaller groups of 12 players each in the following "snakelike" fashion. #1 represents the highest-rated player, #2 the 2nd highest-rated player, etc.

Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
1	2	3
6	5	4
7	8	9
12	11	10
13	14	15
18	17	16
19	20	21
24	23	22
25	26	27
30	29	28
31	32	33
36	35	34

The purpose of dividing the whole division in this manner is so that each group of 12 has approximately the same average rating.

The final three rounds are paired as combinations of King-of-the-Hill (KOTH) for the last round or **Factored Pairings** (in groups of 4), otherwise written "FP4" in the penultimate round, which pairs each group of four players beginning with the leaders of the division as: 1-3, 2-4, 5-7, 6-8.etc. based upon standing at that round. Thus, the final three rounds could be FP6 (1-4, 2-5, 3-6), FP4 (1-3, 2-4...) and KOTH (1-2, 3-4...), with repeat pairings allowed for the last round.

Here is an example: a group of 48 players in one division could be snaked into eight groups of six for the first 5 rounds, followed by two FP4 and one KOTH for a one-day 8 rd. event, all done easily without a computer.

Alternatively, for a longer tournament, a division of 48 players could be snaked into 4 groups of 12 for the first 11 rounds, followed by 3 rounds of FP4 and one or two KOTH.

Or, a group of 24 players could be divided into 3 snake pairing groups for the first 7 rounds followed by 2 FP4 and one KOTH for a 2-day 10-round tourney.

For one-day tournaments, the Pairings Committee also recognizes that snake pairings for 18 players (6 per group, 1st 5 rounds) followed by 2 rounds of FP4 and 1 last round of

KOTH is, in the long run, almost as effective in determining a deserving winner as Modified Swiss, and much easier to administer by hand.

A.1.C. Modified-Swiss Pairings

In this system players with similar win/loss records are paired against each other.

Using the most current Official NASPA Ratings List, order the players from the highest rated to the lowest rated. Then, the top half of the group should be paired against the bottom half. For example, with 32 players, #1 vs. #17, #2 vs. #18,… #16 vs. #32.

The first rounds should not be paired randomly. All subsequent rounds are paired as follows:

1. All the players are ranked according to their standing in the tournament, with all the players having the same number of wins put in the same grouping to be paired. Thus, in our example (assuming no ties), there should be 16 players with one win, and they are ranked according to their spread, from 1st to 16th place.

2. Now pair the top half against bottom half: 1 vs. 9, 2 vs. 10,…8 vs. 16. For the players with one loss (16 of them, representing places 17-32), the pairing would be 17 vs. 25, 8 vs. 26,…24 vs. 32.

   Example: After the fifth round, two players have 5 wins, four players have 4 wins, and 6 players have 3 wins. For the sixth round: the two players with 5 wins are paired together; the four players with 4 wins are ranked according to current standings and then #1 vs. #3, #2 vs. #4; the six players with 3 wins are ranked and then #1 vs. #4, #2 vs. #5, #3 vs. #6. And so on with other lower-ranked players.

3. You should always begin by pairing the players in the highest group first. If there are five players with four wins, in order to pair evenly, the next highest player is added to the top group. That would be the top player with 3.5 or 3 wins if there are no ties. And then you would pair 1 vs. 4, 2 vs. 5, 3 vs. 6. If the players have already played each other (and it's still prior to the last 2 rounds), switch players within the win group if you can until there are no repeat pairings.

4. When there are only 2 rounds to go, many directors adjust the Modified-Swiss Pairings to pair players a second time, occasionally a third time if need be, by automatically pairing as King-of-the-Hill, with #1 vs. #2, #3 vs. #4, etc. This allows the pairings to be made easily and quickly. If you intend to do this, you should announce it prior to the beginning of the tournament.

Note that a slight modification to the pairings for the last two rounds is when you pair the second to last round #1 vs #3, #2 vs 4, #5 vs #7, #6 vs #8...called Factored Pairings (groups of 4), or written FP4, as described on page 50.

Most directors consider it an improvement over two King-of-the-Hills because it gives more players a chance to finish higher up and there is continued pressure on the top players.

A.1.D. Speed Pairings

Speed Pairings were derived from their use at the National SCRABBLE® Champion-ships, where they were used through 2002. Starting with 2004, Snake Pairings (on page 48) have been used at the NSC. For divisions with more than 40 players, some directors have added this dimension to the Modified-Swiss Pairings.

For a 10-round tournament with, for example, 40 players in DIV. 1: Order the players by rating, from the highest to the lowest.

Then divide the players into 4 groups, so that the top group has the top 10 highest-rated players, the second group has the next 10 highest rated players, etc.

Then drawing from each group, pair the first three rounds by pairing #1, 11, 21, 31 together, #2, 12, 22, 32 together and so on until #10, 20, 30, 40 are together. Each player now plays every other player in his/her group of four. Contestant Scorecards need not be collected until after the third round. In order to post the individual game results some directors collect a "Results Slip" that shows the individual game results for one round.

The fourth, fifth and sixth rounds can also be paired using the Speed Pairing method. However, before dividing the players into four groups, first divide them into two halves, the top and bottom, with the top half including those players who are in the top half of the tournament standings at this point in the event (do NOT divide the group by rating). Now you are ready to divide each half into four groups, again using the tournament standings to divide the players. Example: If there are 48 players in the division, then first divide them into 2 halves of 24 players each. Taking the top 24 1st: the players who are in 1st through 6th place are in the top group, 7th through 12th are in the second group, etc. The pairings would then be #1, #7, #13 and #19; #2, #8, #14, #20, etc. This has the effect of forcing the top players to play other top players, and the bottom players will play amongst themselves.

For the 7th and 8th rounds, Speed Pairings may also be used. However, this time, the division should be divided into groups of 12 players each (based on tournament standing as in (4) above). Then #1, 4, 7, 10 will be one group, #2, 5, 8, 11 is another group and #3, 6, 9, 12 will be a third group and so on for the next group of 12 players. The last group may be fewer than 12 players, so you will have to adjust the pairings somewhat.

After the groups are defined (as above in #5), the 7th round has the two players in each group with the best tournament win/loss record playing together. The 8th round has the two individual winners in each group from the 7th round playing together. Example: Round 7 has #1, #4, #7, and #10 in one group. #1 and #4 have the best win/loss records among the four players, so #1 plays #4 and #7 vs. #10. # 4 wins and #10 wins. So, in Round 8, it's #4 vs. #10 and #1 vs. #7.

Rounds 9 and 10 may be paired either KOTH, or FP4 in round 9 and KOTH in the final round. If the number of players in a division is not divisible by four, the last group formed will be a group of 5, 6 or 7 players. You will have to define for that group who has the bye and

who plays who for each round. Remember that byes are scored as a win with a +50pt spread, and that any player should have, at most, one bye in a tournament, if possible.

A.2. The Gibson Rule

A.2.A. What is the Gibson Rule?

At the 1995 Super Stars SCRABBLE® Championship, David Gibson clinched first place with more than one round to play. At that point the question arose: Should David continue to play other top-placing players and potentially determine who finishes 2nd or 3rd? An on-the-spot decision was made to allow those players vying for the other prize places to compete amongst themselves. Thus the Gibson Rule was born.

Using the Gibson Rule, the player who has clinched the top spot will be paired against the player who is currently in the highest position that cannot win a prize or qualify for a NSC finals position or some other qualification position.

At local and regional tournaments, there is still an incentive for the potential "Gibsonized" player to try his best to win in order to gain rating points. Therefore, it is left to the discretion of the director to use or not use the Gibson Rule at his/her event. You should advertise its use or nonuse ahead of time.

Note: Tournaments paired as a true and complete Round Robin may not be able to use the Gibson rule without changing the advertised pairing system.

The NSA before, and now NASPA, has used the Gibson Rule at the National SCRABBLE® Championship since 1996.

A.2.B. How to Determine Whether a Player has Clinched First (or Other Top Spots)

When a player can lose ALL of their remaining games and still retain 1st place by at least one-half of a win no matter which other players win all of their remaining games, then that player has clinched 1st place. Example: If Player A has 13 wins, 2 losses and 1 tie, and the 2nd place player, Player B, has 11 wins and 5 losses, with only two remaining rounds to play, then Player A could still lose both remaining games and finish at 13.5-4.5, whereas Player B, at best, could finish 13-5. Therefore, after Rd. 16, Player A may be "Gibsonized" for the remainder of the tournament.

You may not use spread as a factor in determining Gibsonization, unless you obtain permission from the Tournament Committee before your event, and advertise the use of spread in determining Gibsonization. Example: Player A, in first place, is only 2 games ahead of Player B, in second place, with 2 rounds to go. If Player A is more than 1200 spread points ahead of Player B, then it is unreasonable to believe that Player B can make up all of those points in two games, even if B wins the next two games and A loses those two games. Nevertheless, it could theoretically happen, so NASPA generally discourages the use of spread in determining

Gibsonization. *Note:* At the National SCRABBLE® Championship, NASPA does permit the use of spread in determining Gibsonization, and in Div. 1 only, spreads of 500 pt., 800 pt. and 900 pt. are defined as being able to catch up in spread within 1, 2 or 3 rounds, respectively.

A.2.C. How to Determine who a Gibsonized Player Should Play

Pair the Gibsonized player against the highest placed player who (a) is not in contention for a place prize and (b) would not be paired against a player in contention for a place prize. Here is an example:

Paying Three Places – One Round Left to Play – Pairing King of the Hill

Player A: 14 – 2 +670

Player B: 12 – 3 +465

Player C: 12 – 3 +378

Player D: 11 – 4 +660

Player E: 10 – 5 +126

Player F: 10 – 5 +80

Player G: 10 – 5 -12

Player A, the Gibsonized player, is paired against Player F. This is because Players B, C, and D are still in contention for the second and third place prizes, and player E must be included in the pairings with them, to correctly pair the King of the Hill. Repeat pairings are not considered in this example, but may also have an impact on who the Gibsonized player will play.

Some pairings software will automatically calculate Gibsonization. However, it is important to remember that the software calculation is determined by the configuration details input for the tournament. If those details are not complete and correct, Gibsonization may be incorrectly determined. It is the director's responsibility to review pairings and ensure that Gibsonization is handled correctly. If necessary, re-pair the tournament manually to ensure that pairings are correct. This is particularly important in the later rounds, when pairings may have a direct impact on prize placement.

A.3. Internet Resources for Club and Tournament Directors

Always check the NASPA website for updates and resources. The NASPA website maintains an area specifically for club and tournament directors: the Directors Page.

There is also an online group for NASPA sanctioned directors to discuss questions and thoughts with other directors, including hearing what they have to say about all facets of organizing and running sanctioned NASPA tournaments. NASPA Directors only may join by sending a blank email to naspa-tcd-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

A.3.A. Resources for Tournament Directors

A.3.A.a. Tournament Materials

For your convenience, many of the forms used at NASPA Clubs and Tournaments are available in Adobe PDF format in the [Director Resource section](#) of the NASPA website. You are encouraged to download and print them out and share copies to club members.

As of this printing, available forms include (in alpha order):

- Blank slips (posted 2010-09-20)
- Blank/Challenge slips (older version)
- Combined score/blank/challenge slips (revised 2010-09-25), also available in two-page version for two-sided printing
- Incident Report Form
- Contestant Scorecards (single-sided): 8 Rounds, 9 Rounds, 10 Rounds, 16 Rounds, 17 Rounds, 18 Rounds, 19 Rounds (other scorecard designs can be requested on one month's notice)
- Membership Application Form for gathering data offline to enter later into the online membership application system.
- NASPA scoresheet
- NASPA scoresheet, two-sided
- NASPA scoresheet, two-up, two-sided
- Word Judge Test

A.3.A.b. Sample Tournament Supply List

- Black Markers
- Challenge & Blank designation Slips
- Charts for drawings
- Entrants List
- Extra tiles, clocks, racks
- Hospitality kit: antacids, bandages, pain relievers, aspirin, emery board, needle & thread
- Income/Expense balance sheet for the tournament
- Laptop(s)/computer(s) Long List(s)
- Masking tape. Painter's tape is best for walls but check with the venue to see what they allow
- Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, Eleventh Edition (MW11)
- Newcomer Handout

- NASPA *Official Tournament Rules*
- Official Tournament Word List, most current edition
- Pairing charts
- Pencil sharpener, pens, pencils
- Player scorecards
- Preprinted pairings
- Printer, extra toner, ink and paper
- Reserved/Available slips (Some people put a "reserved" sign at their table—particularly during the endgame when they leave the table for an adjudication, and it could appear that their game is finished.)
- Results slips (color-coded by division, optionally) Score sheets
- Scotch tape
- Snacks
- Special drawing prizes (games & books)
- Stapler
- Table numbers/labels (division names)
- Wall charts for High Play, High Turn, High Game, etc.
- Wall charts for special categories (local theme, etc.)

A.3.B. Tournament Software

Always refer to the NASPA website Directors Page for the most up-to-date information.

A.3.B.a. Software Self-Lookup (SSL)

The table below shows SSL programs that have been evaluated by the NASPA Technology Committee and approved for use in Club and/or Tournament settings:

Note that even if you provide SSL, there may still be those players who will need manual adjudications due to physical limitations. Make sure that you have a person designated to handle manual adjudications.

	Zyzzyva	WHAT	Zarf
Where to Get It	www.zyzzyva.net iTunes App Store	www.wolfberg.net	iTunes App Store
Club Use?	YES	YES	YES
Tournament Use?	YES (but not iOS versions as of yet)	YES	NO

Notes	Most widely used adjudication program.	Free Demo version has SSL.	Chess clock feature is approved for tournament use. SSL still in vetting stage.
Requirements	Windows, Linux, Mac OS X, (iPhone/iPad, but not approved yet for tournament play).	Windows.	iPhone, iPad.

A.3.B.b. Pairing/Tournament Software

NASPA's directors are responsible for using acceptable pairing methods for their events and turning in results for rating purposes in a timely manner, as described at http://scrabble-players.org/w/Submitting_tournament_results#Submission_Timeline. There are currently two widely used tournament programs available for NASPA directors to this end. These are:

- tsh – author; John Chew - poslfit@gmail.com;
  - º Email Group Technical Support – tsh-users@yahoogroups.com
- Director! – author – Marc Levesque – marc.levesque@telus.net
  - º Email Group Technical Support - director_software_discussion@yahoogroups.com

The tournament program authors are required to offer timely technical support for their tournament program in order for NASPA to approve of its use. NASPA directors are to **contact the individual program authors or their respective email group support team for all technical support issues**.

There have been other programs used in the past and others yet to be invented. All past programs and any future program must receive approval from the Technology Committee (naspa-tech@yahoogroups.com) before being used at a sanctioned NASPA tournament.

A.3.C. Tournament Data Submission Formats

Note: when you submit your data, be sure to spell each player's name EXACTLY as it is listed with NASPA (including any initials).

A.3.C.a. Basic Format

The file must be a plain text file, and the format is as follows, with explanation below:

1 SMITH SARAH/423: W45 B L8 T5 W7 L9 W2 W3 L6 W10

2 TILES TERRY/-124: W5 L3 L7 W9 L6 L10 L2 L4 W1 L14

.

45 XYLEM XAVIER/179: L1 L34 L12 W19 L16 W29 W33 W40 W31 L28

Each player is on a separate line. It is helpful to turn off the word-wrapping feature of your text editor to ensure each player is on a single line. The first field on the line is the player's number, starting with 1, followed by a single space. Each line, and therefore each player, is numbered consecutively.

The second field is the player's name as listed with NASPA, last name first, with no punctuation separating the names, and followed by a forward slash (slants from lower left to upper right, usually found in the last row of your keyboard). There must not be a space between the name and the slash.

To ensure accurate record keeping, it is very important that the name you use matches the name recorded with NASPA. If a player decides to play under a different name for whatever reason (marriage, divorce, nickname, etc.), NASPA needs to know this intent. This should be done separately from submitting your tournament data. If there is any doubt which name is being used by NASPA, the monthly tournament-rating file will have the correct information.

Players names can also be followed with their NASPA id, this is particularly important when you have multiple players with the same name. For example: CLUNEY DARREN:AA001820.

The third field is the player's cumulative spread, with a minus sign for negative spreads (but no plus sign for positive spreads), followed by a colon and a space.

There must not be a space after the slash, before or after the spread, before or after the minus sign (if you use one), or before the colon; however, there is a single space after the colon.

The rest of the line is filled with individual game results for that player. Each result is indicated by a W, L, T, or B to represent win, loss, tie, or bye, followed immediately by the opponent's player number with no spaces in between. W3 indicates the player played against player number 3 and won. Likewise, L3 indicates the player played against player 3 and lost, and T3 means the player played against player 3 and tied. Please note that for byes, since there is no ratings computation or opponent, there will be no player number. Results are separated by a single space. You can crosscheck your work by looking at each game result on each line and making sure there is a matching game on the opponent's line. In the example above, Sarah

Smith (player #1) played against player #45 and won in round 1. By looking at line 45, you can see that Xavier Xylem played against player #1 (Sarah Smith) and lost in round 1.

A.3.C.b. Basic Format & Scores

A few modifications to the basic format exist as well. The first allows you to include game scores with the results.

Here is an example: W3-345 In this case, the player won against player #3 and scored 345 points. The score is represented by a single dash after the opponent's player number followed immediately by the score with no spaces in between. Note, however, that there will still be a single space between individual games. In the case of byes, no score need be included since no game actually took place, so a B is all that is required.

This format allows NASPA to build a database of players' scores. At some point in the future NASPA intends to have detailed score statistics on its website (both for individual players and in aggregate), so it is important to start using this new format as soon as possible.

A more detailed example showing of data with scores:

1 FLINTSTONE WILMA/784: W19-414 L18-316 L17-401 W15-522 W14-457

2 GALE DOROTHY/780: W18-475 W15-453 W13-464 L11-375 W9-454

3 RUBBLE BARNEY/655: L17-405 L14-413 W12-494 W10-449 L8-397

A.4. Document History

- Release date: July 19, 2013 — Added reference to NASPA's General Liability Insurance Policy. Removed tournament software programs not used in the past 3 years. Those programs must be recertified by NASPA's Technology Committee. Removed fiscal responsibility section. NASPA trusts its directors to use such in all of its dealings. Removed advice as to suggestions as to where to purchase product. Various punctuation corrections.

- Release date: 29 September 2011 — Removed mention of annual $30 club fee (discontinued by AB summer 2011). Corrected tournament sanctioning deadlines. Added "racks" to required equipment. A few other minor corrections/clarifications.

- Release date: 7 August 2011 — Made "A Review of a Director's Responsibilities" its own section (was in Club section). Added new subsections about handling Director Calls, and Incidents. Added notes to directors about signing members up for tournaments. Updated Tournament Table to reflect new sanctioning requirements and deadlines (ORT down to 6 weeks from 8 weeks, all tournaments on the calendar). Added new Pairing Method: Split Round Robin. Expanded explanation of Pairing Methods.

- Release date: 9 Nov 2009 — Revised for transition from NSA to NASPA. Changed "the NSA" to "NASPA" most places. Added tournament category "Team Challenge and Championships." Moved tournament data submission format details to appendix. Removed many appendix sections (placed on NASPA website). Fixed document to use Styles everywhere. Numerous editing changes, corrected errors in RR and Snake pairing tables. Clarified time and distance separation guidelines to avoid tournament conflicts. Updated pagination.

- Release date: 15 August 2008 — Minor formatting changes including addition of title page, table of contents, correction of page references, fix typos. Changes of note: corrected ORT/LCT table to clarify NSA membership/rating requirements.

- Release date: 16 June 2008 — Major Rewrite of the entire manual, including reorganizing sections, adding new material, and creation of appendices. Changes of note: Required notification time to NSA for ORT reduced from 12 weeks to 8 weeks.