

# NEWCOMERS' HANDOUT

## TOP 10 THINGS TO KNOW

Provided by Director Mary Rhoades

**MOST IMPORTANT:** Never hesitate to call "director" to ask for clarification of a rule. We are always willing to explain things. Stop your clock if you call for a director. At a tournament you should give yourself every opportunity to play well, while still being polite and respectful to other players. At tournaments, your opponents will expect you to play exactly within the rules and you should expect the same of them. The time to have fun and socialize is before or after the game. During the game you should be focused and be fully aware of what is happening in your game in order to make sure both you and your opponent comply with the rules.

**1. NO UNNECESSARY TALKING DURING GAMES, PLEASE!** And keep your voices low when you are finished playing if other games are still being played. This includes no cell phones or other distracting electronic equipment, please.

**2. DRAWING TILES:** Please hold the bag at eye level or at arm's length away from your body, looking away from the bag. Place your drawn tiles on the table or on your rack. Do not put your hand back in the bag until your hand is empty. If you inadvertently overdraw, please call the director for proper procedure.

**3. SCOREKEEPING:** Players must keep a running score for both themselves and their opponents. After making your play, announce your score, start your opponent's clock, record the cumulative score on your score sheet, then draw new tiles. Verifying the score aloud several times during the game is advised, but please do so only when your clock is running. Do not say anything when your opponent's clock is running except to respond to his/her verification.

**4. HOLDING AND CHALLENGING A PLAY:** If you want to think about a word your opponent has played to decide whether to challenge, you should say "Hold" instantly. Make sure it is loud enough for your opponent to hear. While you have put your opponent on hold, your clock will continue running but your opponent may not draw new tiles. If you decide to challenge, stop the clock and say "Challenge". If you decide not to challenge, say "OK" and your opponent may draw new tiles. If you take longer than one minute to decide, your opponent may draw new tiles but must keep them separate from the tiles already on the rack. Make a habit of holding plays often. It is much better to say "Hold...OK" often than to let something slip by and try to challenge too late.

**5. COMPUTER ADJUDICATION:** When you challenge, write the word/words on a challenge slip and both players will go to the computer for adjudication. You cannot change the challenge slip once you have left the table. If you realize the challenged word was written wrong on the challenge slip after you have used the computer, you may change it and enter the correct word. Double confirm this is what the rules say – this issue happens too often. The challenger types the word, steps back, and the opponent hits the appropriate judge key.

**6. PLAYING A BLANK:** Announce what letter the blank is and designate it on your blank designation sheet if available (sometimes on the back of your tally slip for the current game).

**7. COFFEEHOUSING:** Do not make **editorial comments** about your plays. Mispronouncing a word, making comments which might lure your opponent into challenging and other such comments are considered poor sportsmanship.

**8. PLEASE RESPECT THE EQUIPMENT:** If you must eat and drink during a game, try to be extra careful not to get the equipment sticky or wet. Count the tiles before play begins and while picking up at the end of the morning or afternoon session. Arrange the tiles in 4 squares of 25 or one 10x10 square so the next people to play at the board can see that they are all there. Do not hit the clock buttons—a gentle touch works just as well.

**9. OFFENSIVE WORDS:** These are all right on the board, but not from your mouth. Be respectful of other players.

**10. WHEN YOUR GAME IS OVER:** Please either leave the playing room when your game is over and you have turned in your scorecard, or if you stay in the playing room, talking should be done in a very soft voice.

**BE A GOOD SPORT AND HAVE FUN PLAYING!**