



# Tournament Rules

Last Updated: January 7, 2011

## Overview

This document outlines the rules and procedures used in sanctioned tournaments. It also explains the roles and responsibilities of players and tournament officials. All players and tournament officials are responsible for knowing the rules, which may change at any time without prior notice. The latest versions can always be found at [www.thespoils.com](http://www.thespoils.com).

Some tournament programs use a separate Operations Guide that may contradict policies in this document (*e.g. different time limits, mandatory playoffs, etc.*). You should always follow the instructions in the Operations Guide if there is a discrepancy.

If you have any questions or comments regarding our tournament policies, please contact [organizedplay@thespoils.com](mailto:organizedplay@thespoils.com) so we can resolve/address the issue.

## Player Eligibility

Large tournament events such as World Championships, European Championships, National Championships, and State Championships are open to all players except:

- Employees of Arcane Tinmen.
- The Tournament Organizer and anyone helping to run the tournament (*e.g. judges, scorekeepers, volunteers*).
- Players on the Suspended List.
- Players prohibited from entry based on tournament criteria (*e.g. an invitational event that is only open to qualified players*).
- Players prohibited from entry into a tournament's site for any reason.

Small tournament events like Afternoon Saturday Spoils, Season Championships, and local gaming nights are open to all players except:

- Players on the Suspended List.
- Players prohibited from entry based on tournament criteria (*e.g. an invitational event that is only open to qualified players*).
- Players prohibited from entry into a tournament's site for any reason.

The Tournament Organizer should not exclude anyone that is not on the above list from entry into their events. If a player believes they have been denied entry into an event unfairly, that player should contact [organizedplay@thespoils.com](mailto:organizedplay@thespoils.com).



## Formats

Tournaments are divided into two categories for ratings purposes: Limited and Constructed. Limited ratings are based on Sealed Pack and Booster Draft tournaments whereas Constructed ratings are based on Constructed tournaments.

### Sealed Pack Tournaments

In Sealed Pack tournaments, each player constructs a deck from a limited number of packs provided at the beginning of the event. For details on running a Sealed Pack tournament, please see the document entitled [Sealed Pack Tournaments](#).

### Booster Drafts

In Booster Drafts, each player drafts a deck by selecting cards from a series of booster packs which are passed around amongst players. Sometimes Booster Drafts are used in the playoffs of other events. For details on running a Booster Draft, please see the document entitled [Booster Drafts](#).

### Constructed Tournaments

In Constructed tournaments, each player brings their own pre-built deck to the event. For most tournaments, players are required to list the contents of their deck on a registration sheet which is handed in prior to the first round of play. A Constructed deck must utilize a Faction card and must contain at least 75 additional cards. It may only use a maximum of 4 copies of a card; however any number of staple resource cards may be used.

The following cards are banned in Constructed tournaments:

- Emergency Obfuscation
- Meat of the Mountain

## Participants & Responsibilities

### Tournament Organizer

The Tournament Organizer is responsible for the following:

- Selecting an appropriate play environment for the event (*i.e. one with ample space, well-lit, sufficient number of tables and chairs*).
- Providing a sufficient number of judges and staff for the event. We recommend an assistant judge for every 30 players.
- Providing necessary tournament materials (*e.g. product for Sealed Pack events*).
- Ensuring the tournament is run and reported using the latest version of The Spoils™ Tournament Software, available at [www.thespoils.com](http://www.thespoils.com).
- Being present for the duration of the event or appointing a qualified substitute to act on their behalf.



- Ensuring that suspended players do not participate in their events.
- Reporting the results of the tournament to Arcane Tinmen within 7 days.
- Keeping a physical record (*i.e. results entry slips, pairings sheets*) of their tournaments for 6 months.

## Head Judge

All tournaments must be officiated by a Head Judge. The Head Judge is the final authority in all rules or policy disputes and is ultimately responsible for ensuring the event is operated in a manner consistent with the rules.

The Head Judge is responsible for the following:

- Ensuring a fair and fun playing environment for all players.
- Ensuring the tournament follows the tournament rules.
- Overseeing Assistant Judges and training where appropriate.
- Adjudicating appeals made to Assistant Judges.
- Being available and physically present for the duration of the event. If the Head Judge must leave the tournament (*e.g. to handle a family or medical emergency*), an acting Head Judge should be appointed by the Tournament Organizer.

## Assistant Judges

Any judge officiating a tournament besides the Head Judge is an Assistant Judge.

Assistant Judges are responsible for the following:

- Ensuring a fair and fun environment for all players.
- Ensuring all players are following the most current game rules.
- Answering player's questions and adjudicating rules disputes.
- Following the Head Judge's instructions and assisting them as needed.
- Administering penalties when required by the Penalty Guidelines as well as notifying the Head Judge and Scorekeeper of the occurrence.
- Behaving in a calm and professional manner at all times.

## Players

Players are responsible for the following:

- Behaving in a respectful and sportsmanlike manner at all times.
- Knowing the current tournament and game rules.
- Bringing all necessary tournament materials. This may include a legal deck and a way to track influence totals (*e.g. pen/paper, dice, etc.*).
- Maintaining orderly play, including announcing actions, keeping their hand above the table at all times, and clearly indicating depleted and attached cards.
- Following the instructions of judges and other tournament officials at all times.
- Ensuring that their match results are accurately reported to tournament officials.



The Tournament Organizer or Head Judge may announce extra requirements for the players prior to the first round.

## Scorekeeper

Scorekeepers are responsible for the following:

- Ensuring the latest version of The Spoils™ Tournament Software is being used, available at [www.thespoils.com](http://www.thespoils.com).
- Accurately entering all player names and STP Numbers into the software.
- Accurately entering match results into the software.
- Ensuring all judges officiating the tournament are recorded in the software.
- Recording all official penalties in the software.
- Sending the completed tournament results to [organizedplay@thespoils.com](mailto:organizedplay@thespoils.com), or ensuring the Tournament Organizer does so.

## Spectators

Spectators are responsible for the following:

- Not communicating with players or otherwise interfering during matches.
- Complying with the requests of tournament officials.
- Notifying judges of any illegal actions witnessed without personally interfering with the match.

## Procedures & Restrictions

### Minimum Attendance & Number of Rounds

You must have at least 4 players to run a sanctioned tournament. The following chart lists the recommended number of rounds to play before cutting to an optional playoff and how many players should participate in the playoff rounds:

Players	Rounds	Playoff Cut
4-8	3	Top 2
9-16	4	Top 4
17-32	5	Top 8
33-64	6	Top 8
65-128	7	Top 8
129-256	8	Top 8
256+	9	Top 8

### Matches

Matches consist of 1 game, with the winner of that game winning the match.



## **Round Length**

Each tournament must have a predetermined round length. All rounds during that tournament should be the same length. We strongly recommend 45 minutes, but the Tournament Organizer can choose to reduce this time because of the site's needs (*e.g. the store is closing at a particular time*). However, if it is reduced it should never be less than 30 minutes. A reduced round length should only be used when the tournament could otherwise not finish within the time allotted. A tournament's round length should always be announced prior to the first round of play.

## **Time Extensions**

A judge should give a time extension to any match where a question, ruling, or penalty takes longer than 1 minute to resolve. The length of the extension should be roughly equal to the amount of time the match was delayed. It should be noted on the top left corner of the match result slip as a means to inform other judges of the extension. If match result slips are not being used, the judge issuing the time extension is responsible for administering it at the end of the round or instructing another judge to do so.

## **End of Round Procedure**

Judges are responsible for announcing when time has expired for a round. They must ensure all players in the remaining matches hear this announcement. When time expires, the turn in progress should be completed, followed by 3 additional turns. If the game is still not finished, it is considered a draw.

## **Dropping**

A player may drop from a tournament in progress for any reason. They must notify an appropriate tournament official when they wish to drop. Failure to do so will result in the player being paired in the next round, during which they will receive a game loss for tardiness and will be automatically dropped.

In Sealed Pack tournaments, a player is not allowed to drop before the first round is paired. If they wish to drop after, they may do so but will receive a loss in the first round.

## **Running the Playoffs**

The playoffs of a tournament should always be single elimination. Instead of 45 minute rounds, we strongly recommend 60 minutes. If time expires during the playoffs, follow the normal end of round procedure, but instead of an unfinished game being a draw, the player whose faction has lost the highest total influence this game loses. If both Factions have lost an equal amount of influence this game, a coin flip administered by the Head Judge determines the match winner. To avoid ambiguity, the influence lost by each



player's faction during a playoff game should be carefully tracked by a judge or any trustworthy volunteer appointed by the Head Judge.

### **Dropping from the Playoffs**

If a player in the playoffs wishes to drop, they may do so at any time and for any reason. However, their place in the playoffs does not pass down to any other players. If a player drops from the playoffs, they must concede to their current or next opponent and receive a loss.

### **Shuffling**

Each player is required to shuffle their deck prior to the start of each game. Players must shuffle in a way that sufficiently randomizes the deck and does not reveal any cards. Afterwards, the deck must be presented to the opponent and they may shuffle and/or cut it too. If a player's opponent shuffles their deck, that player may make one final cut.

If a player believes their opponent has not made a reasonable effort to sufficiently randomize their deck, they should inform a judge. The Head Judge has the final authority to determine if a player has made a reasonable effort to shuffle and if the deck is indeed sufficiently randomized.

### **Note Taking**

Players are not allowed to reference notes or other written materials that were created prior to the current match they are playing. The same is true while drafting and building decks in Limited tournaments. However, players are permitted to take notes while playing a match for use during that match only (*or for use after the event is over*). Notes taken during one match may not be referenced during a later match. Any notes taken must be written in a timely manner that does not significantly delay the match (*e.g. writing the contents of your opponent's hand is okay; recording their entire deck list is not.*)

### **Electronics**

Players may not use electronic messaging devices or cell phones during matches. In addition, the Tournament Organizer may restrict the use of other electronic devices (*e.g. MP3 players*) during matches at their discretion.

### **Appeal to the Head Judge**

If a player does not believe an Assistant Judge has made a correct ruling, that player is allowed to appeal the decision to the Head Judge. The Head Judge's decision is final.



## Media Coverage

We reserve the right to publish all information pertaining to an event at any time (*e.g. player names, deck lists, video footage, photographs, game transcripts*). Tournament Organizers may also publish these materials at their discretion.

## Determining Match Results

### Conceding

A player is allowed to concede a game in progress at any time. All concessions must be voluntary or the result of a voluntary agreement that one player concedes, determined by a method of both players' choosing. This method cannot violate any other tournament or game rule. If both players want to concede at the same time, the player taking the current turn has priority.

*For example, Tim and Dave are playing each other in a tournament. Either person may voluntarily concede the game. They may also agree that one of them will concede, and then choose which player will concede randomly (e.g. coin flip or die roll).*

### Intentional Draws

Both players may agree to an intentional draw at any time. Players are never allowed to use threats, explicit or implicit, to intimidate another player into agreeing to an intentional draw.

### Finalizing Results

A match result is considered finalized (*therefore concessions and intentional draws will not be allowed*) when any of the following occur:

- A judge witnesses a player win or lose the match naturally.
- Players complete the End of Round Procedure.
- A completed result slip is given to any tournament official.
- A judge terminates a match because a penalty is issued.

Once a match result is finalized, the outcome of the match should not be changed. However, if the Head Judge determines that a result slip for the current round was accidentally filled out incorrectly by the players, they should determine the actual result of the match and correct the result slip. Once the next round has started, results reported by the players from previous rounds cannot be changed, even if they are discovered to be incorrect. For this reason, players are encouraged to check their current score in the tournament frequently. However, if the error was committed by a tournament official, it should always be remedied regardless of when it is discovered.



## **Prize Splits**

Players are allowed to engage in prize splits that do not affect the outcome of any match. The exception is the last match of the finals, during which players may negotiate how the prizes are divided as well as who wins the match.

## **Bribery**

If a player offers anything in exchange for a draw, drop, or concession of another player, it is considered Bribery (*except during the last match of the finals*).

## **Materials**

### **Latest Card Version**

The rules text on some cards may be changed to ensure they work as intended. Other cards may receive updated rules text when they are reprinted or to increase their clarity. All cards must be played as though they were the most recent version of the card. You can find the latest version of any card's text at [www.thespoils.com](http://www.thespoils.com). Players may ask a judge what the rules text of any card is at any time during a tournament.

Intentionally misplaying or misrepresenting a card by using a version with printed text different from its official text is considered Cheating under the Penalty Guidelines.

### **Counterfeit & Proxy Cards**

Counterfeit, proxy, and other player-created cards are not allowed in sanctioned tournaments. However, judges may issue proxies for use if a card is marked or damaged.

### **Artistic Modification**

Players are allowed to make slight artistic modifications to their cards (*e.g. getting them autographed*) provided the card text is not altered or obscured and the art is still recognizable. Players who have cards that they suspect might violate this policy should approach tournament officials prior to the start of the tournament for a final decision.

### **Marked Cards & Sleeves**

Players must ensure that their deck's individual cards or sleeves cannot be identified by markings on their back. If a judge can consistently find a card or sleeve shuffled into a deck by looking at the card or sleeve backs, that card or sleeve is considered to be marked and must be replaced with a proxy card or new sleeve immediately.

### **Card Sleeves**

We encourage players to use card sleeves to extend the life and playability of their cards. The following guidelines apply when using card sleeves:



- All cards in your deck must have the same style of sleeve, including any starting resources.
- Your faction card may be in a different style of sleeve.
- All sleeves should be indistinguishable from each other and free of dirt, fingernail imprints, and other markings.
- No brand or style of sleeves is automatically considered acceptable or unacceptable. Sleeves may become marked due to manufacturing error or excessive use. It is the responsibility of players to ensure their sleeves are not marked at all times.
- Artwork, foiling, and holography do not disqualify a particular style of sleeves from use. Judges are encouraged to personally inspect any deck that may be questionable and use their own discretion. Players wishing to use such sleeves should approach tournament officials prior to the start of the tournament for a final decision.
- Players are not allowed to force their opponent to remove the sleeves from their deck. However, they may ask a judge to inspect any deck they feel is marked. The judge may ask a player to replace some or all the sleeves based on their findings.

## Contact Us

If any person has a question or if a player believes a tournament official has behaved inappropriately they should contact one of the e-mail addresses listed below:

Player appeals:	<a href="mailto:organizedplay@thespoils.com">organizedplay@thespoils.com</a>
General policy questions:	<a href="mailto:organizedplay@thespoils.com">organizedplay@thespoils.com</a>
Game rules questions:	<a href="mailto:organizedplay@thespoils.com">organizedplay@thespoils.com</a>