

# Seattle SCRABBLE® Club - New Player Information

This is an introduction to playing **SCRABBLE®** at Seattle Club, with a brief summary of the Rules intended to welcome newcomers to club play.

## Overview:

Official Club name: North American SCRABBLE® Players Association Club #253, Seattle.

Club meets **6pm Tuesdays** at **University Friends**

**Meetinghouse, 4001 9<sup>th</sup> Ave NE**, just northwest of the University Bridge, in Seattle.

We play four games per night, starting about 6:00pm, each game taking about an hour. You choose your opponent the first round (new players will be matched appropriately); the director pairs subsequent rounds based on performance that night. You can still play the second game if you miss the first one as long as you show up before all the cards have been turned in for the first game (no later than 7:00pm, usually). Likewise, you can start with game three or four. You do not have to play all four games.

There is no fee to join the club and you do not need to phone before you come. Players pay \$6 each night that they attend (except that it's free your first time). The fee pays for room rent, equipment, website, photocopying score sheets, postage, etc. We usually have between 20 and 25 players per week.

Seattle Club follows the Rules of SCRABBLE® that come with the game, with the additional refinements of the Official Tournament Rules (see NASPA website for complete rules).

Club Director:

**Rebecca Slivka, (206) 285-7188, [slivkar@comcast.net](mailto:slivkar@comcast.net)**

Club Founder & Director Emeritus:

**Ann Ferguson, (425) 771-5483, [aferg1@yahoo.com](mailto:aferg1@yahoo.com)**

## First-time Players:

Please arrive **by 6pm** for the first game (or by **6:45** if starting with game two). No fee first night.

You get free challenges, and you can refer to 2- and 3-letter word lists during play.

There is no time penalty (although you must use a clock, and the game may be stopped if it runs over time)

You record scores for each game, win-loss record, spread, cumulative spread, etc., on your Score Card and place it in the red basket after each game (so the director can do pairings).

☛ **If you leave before the last game, please draw a line through the games you are NOT playing and hand in your card. Tell the Director if you leave before the last game!**

☛ **You must hand in your card at the end of the evening.**

## Equipment:

The Club provides boards, tiles and clocks. We use deluxe boards (ridges hold tiles in place and board spins) and “pro-tiles” (smooth surface so you cannot feel letters). Clocks are digital or analog game clocks (chess clocks).

## Club Etiquette:

Cell phones **MUST BE TURNED OFF!**

## Blue Card or White Card?

Seattle Club uses two divisions for pairings. If your average is 365 or higher you must play white card, however blue card players may choose to “play up” into the white card division. New players usually start with a blue card.

## Word Source

Club uses the Official Tournament and Club Word List (OWL) to adjudicate challenges. This is essentially the same as the Official Scrabble® Player’s Dictionary 4<sup>th</sup> Edition (OSPD4), which is available in most bookstores, except that the OWL also includes about 200 expurgated words.

You must be a member of NSA to purchase the OWL.

## Pairings:

All games are one-on-one.

Club Director (or designated representative) assigns opponents for rounds 2-4. Pairings are based on win-loss record and spread within division, with adjustments to avoid re-matches, to prevent couples or family members from playing each other, and to ensure that new players have appropriate opponents.

If the number of players is uneven, the director refers to a list of players “sitting out” and chooses the next one to skip a game.

## Using the Clock

Game clocks are used to allot 25 minutes of playing time to each player. While this may seem short to new players, it is usually more than enough time. Most players get used to the clock very quickly.

Clock starts when first player looks at first tile.

Neutralize clock to dispute score, call for director, during challenges, etc.

Your turn does not end until you hit your clock.

## Scoring

You must keep track of your score and that of your opponent.

Score sheets are provided by the Club but you may use your own if you wish.

Player statistics are published weekly on the club website.

☛ **Remember to turn in your (blue or white) Score Card as soon as you finish your game. Draw a line through games you are not playing if you leave early—and TELL the DIRECTOR you are LEAVING!**

## Order of Play

From the Official Tournament Rules, Section II.K:

*Sequentially, this is how a turn proceeds:*

1. *After your opponent's turn ends, record the cumulative score before beginning your play.*
2. *Position your tiles on the board. You may remove or reposition your tiles as you like to change your play during your turn.*
3. *Designate the blank, if applicable.*
4. *Declare the score.*
5. *Start your opponent's clock, ending your turn.*
6. *Record the cumulative score to that point in the game. You may NOT pre-record the cumulative score.*
7. *Draw tiles to replenish your rack.*
8. *Track tiles, if desired.*  
*EXCEPTION: Steps 1 and 6, recording the cumulative score, are waived if there are no tiles remaining to draw.*

## Drawing Tiles

Hold tile bag above eye level and avert eyes.

Show empty palm before putting hand in bag.

Draw tiles and place face down on table or directly on rack.

If you remove too many tiles from bag you must notify opponent, neutralize clock and resolve (see below).

## Overdrawing

If you have overdrawn, notify opponent and neutralize clock.

Place your tiles face down on the table. Your opponent chooses 2+ the number of tiles overdrawn and turns them face up, then throws his/her choice of overdrawn tiles back into the bag.

It doesn't matter if you have looked at the tiles or not. If you have mixed drawn tiles with your rack, then opponent chooses from all tiles, otherwise just from newly drawn tiles.

## Challenge & Hold:

You can challenge an opponent's play (any or all words created) any time after s/he hits the clock and before s/he draws a tile out of the bag.

Announce "**Challenge!**", neutralize the clock, hold up your hand, and wait for word judge to adjudicate the play.

☛ You can give yourself more time to decide by announcing "**Hold!**" This prevents your opponent from drawing while you decide whether to challenge the play or let it go (your clock still runs while you are holding). Strongly encouraged for all players.

## Passing

You can choose to skip a turn by announcing "**Pass!**" and hitting your clock (usually only done near end of game).

## Exchanging

Note: You are allowed to exchange only if there are at least 7 tiles left in the bag (count first, to make sure!).

Place tiles to be exchanged face down on the table.

Announce "**Exchange [# tiles]**" and hit clock.

Remove new tiles from bag (place on face down on the table, or directly onto your rack).

Put old tiles back in the bag.

## Director:

*If you have any questions about rules or procedure during the game, call for a "DIRECTOR!"*

## Resources:

North American Scrabble® Players Association (NASPA):  
[www.scrabbleplayers.com](http://www.scrabbleplayers.com)

Seattle Club: [www.seattlescrabble.org](http://www.seattlescrabble.org)

## Prizes:

|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| Category word: \$5 | 500+ game: \$1  |
| 75+ non-bingo: \$1 | 600+ game: \$2  |
| 100+ play: \$1     | 700+ game: \$5  |
| Bingo Bonus: \$5   | [Blue card: 3+ bingos in a game,<br>white card: 3+ bingos in a row] |

## Tournaments:

Seattle hosts several one-day tournaments each year, in addition to the multiday Emerald City Tournament and team challenge tournaments against Portland and Vancouver. Check the club website for dates and details.

Other nearby tournaments: Portland, Vancouver and Victoria, BC, host one-day and multi-day tournaments.

## Game Strategy and Further Information:

*Everything Scrabble*, Joe Edley

*Word Freak: Heartbreak, Triumph, Genius, and Obsession in the World of Competitive Scrabble Players*, Stefan Fatsis

Movies: *Word Wars* [2004] and *Scrabylon* [2003]

For announcements, player statistics, tournament information, links to study lists, game strategy, and other websites, visit the Seattle Club website:

**[www.seattlescrabble.org](http://www.seattlescrabble.org)**