

# **Rising Empire Studios Organized Play**

## **Alpha Clash Trading Card Game**

### **Tournament Rules Manual**

The Rising Empire Studios (RES) Organized Play Tournament Rules Manual is designed to outline the requirements and expectations of all participants – including but not limited to players, judges, and spectators – at any official RES Organized Play event for the Alpha Clash Trading Card Game. All participants are expected to read, understand, and adhere to the rules contained within this document to the best of their ability and ask any questions they might have to a tournament official if anything is unclear. This is to ensure smooth operations of events and allows for a fun, satisfying experience for all participants of the event, regardless of their position or previous experience.

The Tournament Rules Manual and any other Organized Play documents exist to help maintain fairness and integrity at events and ensure that all RES events are run according to the same high standards for all involved. Participants should always know what to expect from any official RES Organized Play event and can plan their experiences accordingly. Participants who behave in a way that damages that integrity or fairness of an event may experience penalties from judges, tournament staff or RES directly, including but not limited to game losses, match losses, disqualifications, suspensions or even restrictions from future events.

This is a living document, and changes may have been made since its original publication. You may access and download the most recent version of the document from the Alpha Clash Trading Card Game official website at <https://alphaclashTCG.com/>

If you have any questions regarding the Tournament Rules Manual, please contact us at [support@alphaclashTCG.com](mailto:support@alphaclashTCG.com) or in the official **Alpha Clash TCG Discord**.

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# 1 Tournament Fundamentals

## 1.1 Tournament Participants

All members of an event, including but not limited to, players, spectators, judges, tournament organizers, and scorekeepers are collectively defined as participants in an event. All tournament participants are required to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner in the event area, venue, and in the vicinity of the venue. All participants are tasked with acting so that the event can operate fairly, and work to make the event satisfying and enjoyable for all involved.

The tournament organizer maintains the right to eject any participant from the event if they deem necessary.

### 1.1.1 Spectators

Any participant who is not a tournament official or a player, or any player not currently in a match, is defined as a spectator. Spectating at an event is a privilege and can be revoked by the Head Judge or Tournament Organizer at any point. A spectator must remain neutral while observing a game and ensure their presence does not disrupt the event or other competitors.

Spectators must abide by the following rules during an event:

- Spectators must not speak to or communicate with any player currently engaged in a match.
- Any comments or questions regarding a match in progress must be made far enough away to not interfere with the match in progress or allow the players to overhear the conversation.
- If a spectator notices a rules violation or a violation in tournament procedures, they are to alert a judge immediately. A spectator may ask a match in progress to pause play while a judge is called.
- If a spectator's presence is distracting to players or interfering with the event at large, they may be asked to move. If a judge or other tournament official asks a spectator to move, they must do so immediately.

If a spectator fails to adhere to these rules, penalties will be applied to the player or players the spectator is associated with, and they may be asked to leave the event.

Members of the media who wish to attend any official RES event to create written, photographic, audio, or video content are also considered spectators, but must adhere to the following rules in addition to the ones listed above:

- Any media presence must contact the Tournament Organizer in advance of the event for permission to attend.
- Media representatives must provide evidence of their association or employment with a news agency prior to the event starting.
- Members of the media are required to know and comply with any applicable laws concerning the privacy of other event participants and must obtain written releases of privacy from any affected participant in an event.
- Members of the media are responsible for their equipment and employees.

If members of the media prove distracting or obstructive to the event, tournament officials can ask them to move. They may also be asked to leave, at the discretion of the tournament organizer.

### 1.1.2 Players

A player is defined as any participant entered in an event as a competitor. A player may not also be participating in an event as a Tournament Organizer, Judge, Scorekeeper, or other member of tournament staff, except in Tier 1 events.

Playing in an event comes with certain responsibilities. These include the following:

- Registering for an account with The Clashground. If you do not have an account, you can register for one here: <https://play.alphaclashctg.com/>. Players are expected to keep their account details up to date and may not register for more than one account. A player without an account must communicate this with the Tournament Organizer to be entered into the event and receive any information regarding pairings for the event.
- Remaining in good standing to participate in events by adhering to all responsibilities and guidelines outlined in this document and all other official documents published by Rising Empire Studios.
- Reading and understanding the most current version of the Advanced Rulebook, Tournament Rules Manual, and Card Errata, as well as carefully reading and understanding each of the cards within their deck.
- Behaving in a sportsmanlike manner during the event.
- Obeying any announced time limits and start times, while playing in an efficient manner.
- Communicating clearly with all participants in an event, including opponents, judges, and tournament staff. This includes announcing and responding to cards and effects in a game, reporting completed match results in a timely manner, and communicating any errors or issues that might arise.
- Cooperating with judges and calling a judge whenever the following occurs: they notice a rules violation; they raise a concern over a rule or policy; they are offered a bribe or wager; they are asked to incorrectly report match results or notice that match results were incorrectly reported. Players should never call a judge to gain an unfair advantage or seek penalties against other players. Only a judge can decide when a penalty is required.

Players seeking to gain an advantage, coerce a penalty or misrepresent the game state to rule in their favor will be held accountable for unsportsmanlike conduct or cheating.

- Not participating in any illegal activity.

Players who do not uphold these expectations can be restricted or barred from future official events at the discretion of Rising Empire Studios. Tournament organizers maintain the right to restrict any player from events based on these guidelines, or any guideline provided directly by the tournament organizer themselves.

### 1.1.3 Scorekeepers

A Scorekeeper is responsible for correctly creating accurate pairings, confirming and submitting match results, and maintaining correct tournament information throughout the event. The Scorekeeper is responsible for understanding the software utilized for organized play events, as well as procedures and information relevant for scorekeeping an event.

If an event does not have an official scorekeeper, these duties will fall on the Head Judge or an appropriate Floor Judge. At smaller events, this task will fall on the Tournament Organizer.

### 1.1.4 Judges

Judges, sometimes referred to as Floor Judges, are responsible for enforcing the rules of any official tournament, monitoring the tournament, answering any rulings questions, correcting illegal plays, and resolving game issues, resolving disputes between participants, performing deck checks, issuing pairings and reporting results. These responsibilities may also include other tasks assigned by the head judge or tournament organizer. If judges must break up into teams, a Judge will be appointed as a Team Lead within each group to lead the team in their duties and act as a point of contact.

Judges must be fair and friendly but remain firm when working at an event. Judges are expected to encourage sporting behavior, while still enforcing the rules of the game. While judging, judges should act professionally and try to avoid excessive socialization with other judges or competitors and attempt to avoid distractions that could keep their attention away from the event. Unless responding to a judge call, a judge should never interact and socialize with players while they are in a match.

Judges should wear official apparel while judging an event. If there is not access to official judge apparel, predetermined, uniform apparel will suffice. This uniformity allows a judge to be easily recognizable across a potentially crowded room. While at an event, a judge should not wear their official apparel unless staffed for the event.

Judges should be prepared for their responsibilities on the floor. Some events, typically larger ones, will allow judges to split into teams to handle tasks like deck checks, judging the featured

match stream, or other similar tasks. A judge should be prepared to assist others in their tasks if needed. Judges should:

- Stay current with new rulings, policies, and cards as they are released.
- Constantly observe the event and the event space and maintain the cleanliness of the area by pushing in chairs, removing trash from tables or the floor, and straightening tables and table numbers.
- Actively walk the floor and observe matches while keeping an eye out for any rule or gameplay violations. Judges are required to step in if they see something, even if a player has not called for a judge.
- Ensure players are not at a disadvantage due to time lost in their match because of a ruling, a deck check, or a penalty being issued. A judge should issue an appropriate time extension equal to the time it took to resolve the issue, which should be immediately recorded and made aware of to the players.
- Never coach players or reveal private knowledge while responding to calls or questions.
- Answer questions, if relevant to the current game or game state about:
  - Game mechanics
  - Card text or rulings
  - If a certain play is legal

Judges do not need to wait for players to attempt an action to answer any questions listed above and should never instruct a player to play before their question can be answered.

Judges should not answer in a way that provides players with a strategic advantage, instruct players on how to best play, reveals private information, or discusses cards not relevant to the current game or game state.

When a player needs to call a judge, they should pause play, raise their hand, call “Judge!” and leave their hand up until the judge can get to them. A player should make note of the time remaining in the round to inform the judge when calculating the time extension. When a player requests a judge, the judge should approach the table, listen carefully to the question provided, ask any clarifying questions as necessary, and issue the ruling appropriate for the situation. A player may choose to appeal the ruling if they disagree or would like a second opinion, in which case the judge will pass the ruling off to the Head Judge as soon as possible. After the ruling has been finalized or accepted, a judge should issue a time extension if necessary, and instruct the players to resume their game. If any penalties are issued, those should be made aware to the players during this time as well.

Unless answering a judge-call or reviewing a game in progress, judges should refrain from conversing or fraternizing with players still engaged in a match. This is to avoid the appearance of favoritism and to prevent any distractions from impacting a game.



### 1.1.5 Head Judge

The Head Judge is responsible for overseeing the event and the rest of the judges on staff. There can only ever be a single Head Judge per event, and if there is only one judge for an event that person is automatically considered the Head Judge for the event. Otherwise, the Head Judge will be selected ahead of time by the Tournament Organizer. It is recommended that a judge with more experience be selected as the Head Judge for any events Tier 2 or higher.

The Head Judge is the final authority regarding card rulings, interpretations, gameplay rulings and appeals at an event. A Head Judge's ruling cannot be overturned by any person other than themselves at an event.

In addition to the tasks of the judge staff at large, which the Head Judge should assist with when able, a Head Judge is responsible for the following during an event.

- To familiarize themselves with the current and correct rulings for card interactions and gameplay, as well as correctly enforce those rulings during the event.
- To ensure the proper penalties are issued and players are accountable for their actions if they violate the rules of the game or tournament rules, even unintentionally.
- To deliver the final ruling whenever necessary, even overturning the ruling of a Floor Judge on appeal if needed.
- To assign tasks and teams as needed, as well as appointing Team Leads for each team that needs one.
- To be present during the event and free of distractions to ensure that any issues, questions, and appeals can be handled swiftly and correctly.
- To act as a mentor and guide for the other members of tournament staff. Receiving feedback and evaluation can be crucial for tournament staff to continue developing in their careers and will help create good events in the future.
- In the event of a suspension or eviction from a venue, the Head Judge is responsible for submitting a report to RES detailing the incident to await further action. The report should include details of all the factors leading up to the suspension or eviction and should be as free of opinions as possible, except for a statement detailing the Head Judge's assessment of the situation. If a Head Judge feels the need to disqualify a player, and deems it worthy of reporting, they are also responsible for submitting that report to RES, detailing the incident.

If the Head Judge is unable to complete their duties for a set period, whether it is for a break or other conflict that might arise, they can appoint a Floor Judge or the Tournament Organizer as Head Judge temporarily. In certain cases, the event organizer should be the primary choice for this temporary position if not doing so would damage the integrity of the event.

The Head Judge maintains the authority to disqualify any participant from the event if they are deemed detrimental to the event's overall success. With the permission of the Tournament Organizer or event organizer, they may even be ejected from the premises, or ejected from the tournament if it is taking place alongside other activities.

### 1.1.6 Tournament Organizer

Tournament Organizers are responsible for scheduling and hosting events and ensuring their smooth operation. They are responsible for the following tasks:

- Securing a clean, safe venue with enough space to accommodate the intended number of participants.
- Announcing the event ahead of time and actively promoting it.
- Selecting the tournament format and other pertinent information.
- Gathering staff to effectively run the event.
- Supplying any required materials for the event.
- Reporting event results to RES along with any other required information.

The Tournament Organizer is also responsible with providing players with the following information:

- Tournament Type (Swiss pairings, Single Elimination, etc.)
- Tournament Format (Standard Constructed, Draft, Sealed, etc.)
- Time allotment per round
- Number of rounds (Final number will be determined by number of players present at the event)
- End of Round Procedures
- Score Reporting information
- Top Cut Details
- Prize pool and distribution
- Tournament staff introductions
- Any scheduled breaks during the event.

This information should be communicated as soon as possible while at an appropriate time to the players and other participants of the event. Tournament Type and Format should be announced when the event is first being advertised, while things like number of rounds, time per round, end of round procedures and other information related directly to the event logistics should be announced to the participants prior to the first round of the event. This day-of information can also be shared by the Head Judge to allow them a chance to communicate with the players before the start of the event.

The Tournament Organizer is responsible for ensuring the event is run in accordance with the rules and policies provided by RES and must be present for the duration of the event.

Certain criteria must be met for a Tournament Organizer to be approved to run official RES events. Those interested in becoming a Tournament Organizer should register on The Clashground and submit an application for their store.

### 1.1.7 Ineligible Participants

For various reasons and circumstances, some people will be deemed ineligible to participate in RES events as a player, judge, tournament organizer, scorekeeper, or even sometimes as a spectator.

Any person employed by RES or directly associated with the production of the Alpha Clash TCG cannot play in any Tier 2 event or higher.

Any tournament official associated with a Tier 2 event or higher cannot play in that specific event. This includes Tournament Organizers, Judges, Scorekeepers, and any other member of tournament staff.

Players who have been banned or suspended by Tournament Organizers or stores cannot participate in official events hosted by that entity.

Players who have been suspended from events by RES cannot play, judge, or act as a different member of event staff in official events.

## 1.2 Registering for a Tournament

The Clashground is the official registration system for players and tournament organizers alike. TOs can create, publish, and run events and players can search and apply for nearby events, see their matchups, and enter results for their matches during events. While not required, it is highly recommended that players utilize this resource for their events and matches.

Once the event is created, Tournament Organizers can appoint judges to the event, and players will be able to locate the events near them and apply in advance.

<https://play.alphaclashtcg.com/>

### How to Register

#### 1. For Stores/Tournament Organizers

- a. Sign-up/Log in for The Clashground | <https://play.alphaclashtcg.com/>
- b. Select your profile, and then select “LGS Application.”
- c. Fill out and submit the following form – RES will contact you with approval.

#### 2. For Players

- a. Sign-up/Log in for The Clashground | <https://play.alphaclashtcg.com/>
- b. App Store/Google Play Coming Soon!

Players and TOs are responsible for keeping their information up to date.

Any minor, someone younger than 18 years old or others not defined as adults as determined by applicable laws of their country or region, must register and use the application with the permission of a parent or legal guardian.

### 1.3 Convention Events

Some events held at a convention or other similar gathering might require participants to purchase a convention badge or an admission pass for the event in addition to their entry. It is the responsibility of any player registered for these events to ensure they have a valid badge to access the event at large and the tournament within.

## 2 Tournament Information

### 2.1 Tournament Levels

RES events are hosted at various levels, or Tiers, of competitiveness and rules enforcement. There are four Tiers of RES event:

- Tier 1 – Casual – These events are typically store organized play events and are designed to put fun and enjoyment over solely winning. These events include constructed, draft, sealed, and pre-release events.
- Tier 2 – Competitive – These events are designed to be the introduction to competitive gameplay, more common but smaller in nature than higher level events. These events include Store Championships, Regional Championship Qualifiers, or other similar events.
- Tier 3 – Competitive – These events are the largest of their kind, serving as the last stops before Professional level play. These events include Regionals or other similar events with large scale attendance or prizing.
- Tier 4 – Professional – These events represent the pinnacle of RES tournaments and are carried out at the highest level of gameplay. National Championships, World Championships and other similar events are the only events held at this level.

Tier 1 events are designed for casual play and provide a fun, enjoyable environment for players. Rules and tournament policies are still important, but the onus should be on teaching from mistakes rather than overly penalizing players who are trying to learn the game or have a fun time. Tournament staff may participate in Tier 1 events that they are hosting, but any official decision should be made fairly, and not for the benefit of the staff.

Tier 2 and 3 events are intended to be more competitive, mostly varying by size of event between the two of them. These events put more responsibility on the players to know their cards, game rules, and how to play fairly and sportsmanlike. Starting at Tier 2 events, tournament staff are not permitted to participate in the events they are working on.

Tier 4 events represent the pinnacle of RES events and should be treated with the highest level of play, and highest level of caution and care when judging. It is important at these events that all participants, whether players or staff, operate at the best they can to ensure a fair, exciting event of gameplay.

### 2.2 Tournament Formats

There are a variety of formats currently supported for RES events that Tournament Organizers may select from when registering for a tournament.

<b>Tournament Format</b>	<b>Format Definition</b>
Constructed	Players will provide a tournament-legal deck to play in a constructed event.

Sealed	Players will receive sealed product at the event and will construct a legal deck from only the product provided.
Draft	Players will receive four sealed draft booster packs and draft cards in a pod of eight players. After their card pools have been selected, players will construct a legal deck from their drafted card pool.

## 2.3 Tournament Structure

Tournament Organizers may choose to run events using Swiss pairings, single elimination, or a combination of Swiss + single elimination. The combination of Swiss pairings + single elimination top cuts should be reserved for Tier 2 events or higher, and only for events of the appropriate size. (See section 2.6 for further details.)

In the circumstance that a Tier 1 event has four or five players, therefore not enough for proper Swiss pairings, a round robin system may be used to achieve three or four round events, although this method should be used sparingly and not as an ideal tournament structure. All Tier 2 events or higher must have at least eight participants to proceed. Events without eight participants will have to reschedule or postpone their event.

<b>Tournament Structure</b>	<b>Structure Definition</b>
Swiss Pairings	<p>Players will be paired according to their win/loss record. Players are not eliminated for losing a round but will instead be paired against opponents with similar win/loss records for the remainder of the event until the corresponding number of rounds for the number of participants have been completed. (After the first round, players who are 1-0 will be paired against each other while players who are 0-1 will be paired against each other, unless there is an odd number of corresponding pairs.)</p> <p>Players may drop from Swiss pairings at any time by alerting the Scorekeeper prior to the next round starting. If there is an odd number of players, a random player amongst the lowest reported record will receive a Bye, counting as a win for the round.</p>
Single Elimination	<p>After each round, half of the registered players will be eliminated each round as the winner of each match progresses to the following round. This will continue until there is a single player remaining, who will be declared the overall winner. If there is an odd number of players, a random player in the first round will receive a Bye, counting as a win for the round.</p>
Swiss Pairings + Single Elimination Top Cut	<p>Players will be paired according to their win/loss record. Players are not eliminated for losing a round but will instead be paired against opponents with similar win/loss records for the remainder of the event until the corresponding number of rounds for the number of participants have been completed. Players may drop from Swiss pairings at any time by alerting the Scorekeeper prior</p>

	<p>to the next round starting. If there is an odd number of players, a random player amongst the lowest reported record will receive a Bye, counting as a win for the round.</p> <p>Depending on the number of participating players, a predetermined number of players will progress to Single Elimination Top Cut once the appropriate number of Swiss rounds have concluded. Players are paired off based on final standings after Swiss rounds (1<sup>st</sup> v 8<sup>th</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> v 7<sup>th</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> v 6<sup>th</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> v 5<sup>th</sup>, etc.) and proceed to single elimination finals play.</p>
Round Robin	<p>Players will be paired against each other player in the event. Players are not eliminated after a loss and will be paired regardless of overall record. The event will end after each player has successfully played against each other player. If there is an odd number of players, each player will receive a Bye during the event, counting as a win for the round.</p>

## 2.4 Match Structure

During a tournament, a match will include a set number of games, with the player who wins the majority of games winning the match. Certain events will have a varying number of games played, time limits, or special rounds for deckbuilding.

### Sealed/Draft Match Structure

Best-of-three Game Match

Recommended Match Time – 50 minutes

Extra Time – 5 minutes

**\*Sealed/Draft events should receive a 50-minute period for product to be opened/drafted and decks to be constructed. This time may end early if all participants agree that the process has been completed and are ready to begin play.**

### Standard Match Structure

Best-of-three Game Match

Recommended Match Time – 50 minutes

Extra Time – 5 minutes

### Top Cut Finals Match Structure

## Best-of-Three Game Match

Recommended Match Time – No time Limit

Tournament Organizers may choose to have a round time be shorter or longer than the recommended time limit provided, but this should be no less than 40 minutes and no more than 60 minutes and must be announced prior to the start of the tournament.

At Tier 3 events or higher, Tournament Organizers may choose to have Top Cut Finals be a best-of-five Game Match instead of best-of-three. This must be announced prior to the start of the tournament and cannot be used for events of a lower tier.

## 2.5 Number of Rounds + Top Cut

The number of Swiss rounds will be determined by the total number of players registered at the start of the event. Once the appropriate number of rounds has ended, Swiss rounds will come to an end, final placements will be calculated, and the event will either end or proceed to Top Cut finals.

Tournament Organizers may opt to run events with no Top Cut, provided that this information has been made public prior to the start of the event.

<b>Number of Players</b>	<b>Number of Rounds</b>	<b>Top Cut (If Applicable)</b>
4-5	3/5 rounds of Round Robin OR 2/3 rounds of Single Elimination	None
6-8	3 rounds of Swiss	None
9-16	4 rounds of Swiss	Top 4
17-32	5 rounds of Swiss	Top 8
33-64	6 rounds of Swiss	Top 8
65-128	7 rounds of Swiss	Top 8
129-256	8 rounds of Swiss	Top 16

The number of Swiss rounds is designed to have one player left undefeated after the last round has concluded but should not conclude prior to the listed number of rounds even if a single player is left



undefeated sooner in the event. The number of rounds should be announced at the start of the event and cannot be changed once it is announced. A variable number of rounds may be announced instead of a set amount, with specific criteria provided to end the event.

## 2.6 Publishing Tournament Information

Participants are free to publish any details of play or the results of a tournament, subject to any applicable laws of the region where the event is held.

A deck list may be published at any time after the event, so long as the information is publicly accessible, and all player data is published simultaneously. If this can't be the case, all information in this regard should be kept confidential for the duration of the event to prevent any unnecessary advantage.

For Tier 2 events and above, if deck lists were required, Tournament Organizers are required to submit deck lists of the finals participants as part of their final event reporting.

Rising Empire Studios reserves the right to publish tournament information, including but not limited to deck lists, audio recordings, video recordings, awards or any other information related to an event. Attending an official event may lead to a participant's image or likeness being recorded and published, on behalf of Rising Empire Studios, its tournament organizers, and any approved media bodies. The same is true for their name, deck list, gameplay, any statements made at the event, or other aspect of the event, in part or its entirety.

## 2.7 Live Stream Broadcast

While attending RES official events, either hosted directly by RES or other tournament organizers, players may be asked to play a feature match that will be broadcast to a larger audience and/or online viewers on various platforms. The existence of these feature matches should be made known before the start of the event, during the head judge's announcements. These matches will be chosen at the discretion of the tournament organizer, head judge or stream casters. If a player wishes to opt out of these matches, they must alert tournament staff at the start of the event, following the announcement of the stream.

While playing, players must abide by the tournament organizer's directions regarding match location, and these matches may require additional equipment, including but not limited to new card sleeves, the use of specific play mats, and changes in apparel.

It is not required for a stream caster to be a qualified judge, but if the caster notices a violation of game rules, the game state, or the Tournament Rules Manual, they are required to notify a judge immediately.

Players are allowed and encouraged to watch the stream in between matches for their entertainment but should not interfere with the match in any way. However, if they notice a rules violation, like a stream caster they are required to notify a judge. In any case, the judge will decide

whether to intervene with the match, so as not to judge the featured match more strictly because of their position.

Due to the public nature of a streamed match, players who make it to the finals of an event with a stream broadcast will be required to present open deck lists to their opponents. This is to prevent any player from receiving a direct advantage by watching the stream matches, or a direct disadvantage for playing in one.

## 2.8 Reporting Tournament Information

It is the responsibility of the tournament organizer to report tournament results within 48 hours of the completion of the event. This includes submitting match results into The Clashground and ending the event and submitting deck lists of finalists if the event required deck lists from the competitors.

## 3 Player Requirements

### 3.1 Identification

Valid photo identification is required for any event with an age restriction or an invitational structure. Players at these events will be required to provide a form of personal photo identification. Acceptable forms of identification include school or state ID cards, driver's licenses, and passports. Contact the Tournament Organizer ahead of time if you have concerns with providing this information.

### 3.2 Tournament Materials

While there is plenty that players are allowed to bring to an event, there are very few items explicitly required for a player to bring to an event. Players must provide a tournament legal deck, sleeved in opaque sleeves, to Constructed events, and must bring opaque sleeves to Limited events.

Additionally, you must bring any appropriate entry fees or proof of preregistration and identification. You might also be required to provide a complete, legible deck list.

#### 3.2.1 Decks

A tournament legal deck consists of:

- Contender: 1 card
- Main Deck: A total of 50 cards, made up of Clash cards, Clash Buffs, Clashgrounds, Actions, and Accessories.
- Sideboard: 0-10 cards, made up of the same types of cards found in the main deck that can be switched out between games within a match.
- A player may only have one Contender card per deck list. Contender cards cannot be included in the sideboard and are not able to be changed once the event starts.
- A player may only have up to one card with “Unrivaled” in its text box per deck, including sideboard.
- A player may only have up to four cards with “Clash Buff” in its subtype per deck, including sideboard.
- A player may only have up to four copies of any other card not listed above per deck, including sideboard.

In constructed events, you are responsible for resetting your deck to its original configuration in between rounds. In Limited events, you may feel free to adjust your configuration throughout the event and are not required to return to a preset main deck and sideboard.

### 3.2.2 Cards

Only official cards created by RES may be used at events. Cards in the main deck or sideboard that have damage noticeable through the sleeve cannot be used. If a card is damaged over the course of an event, a judge may issue a proxy to be used while shuffling to prevent the damaged card from causing a card to be marked.

Cards in the main deck or side deck can be used if they are signed, marked, stamped, or painted, so long as these alterations are not noticeable through the card sleeve, are not inappropriate for tournament use, and do not obstruct relevant card information in any way.

A contender card altered in any way may be used if it meets the same criteria above. Due to their nature of being separate from the decks, these cards may also be used if graded/"slabbed" or in other highly protective cases, so long as those protective measures do not obstruct any relevant card information.

### 3.2.3 Card Sleeves

Players must use opaque sleeves to protect their cards during an event and prevent any card from being distinguishable from one another. All sleeves in the Main Deck must be identical in terms of color, wear, and design, and all cards must be inserted into sleeves in the same directions. Cards in the Sideboard may be unsleeved, or sleeved in sleeves of a different color, but must be inserted into sleeves matching the Main Deck to be used. Your Contender card may be sleeved in a way different from the rest of the deck.

Players are allowed to use multiple sleeves to sleeve cards in their deck, so long as each sleeve is applied in the same direction for each card and is not excessive. Judges may ask a player to unsleeve or reduce the number of sleeves on their cards. No matter how many sleeves are used, a player's sleeves may not obstruct the front of a card in any way or be overly reflective to cause glare. Card sleeves with offensive text or imagery are not allowed.

Players are responsible for ensuring that their cards and sleeves are indistinguishable from each other for the duration of the tournament. Cards that can be identified without looking at their front face due to discoloration, wear, a bent corner, or other elements that could occur during the event are considered distinguishable. Sleeves with excessive wear, noticeable pattern differences, factory defects or other markings that can be used to indicate a card will be considered marked and penalties could be applied at the discretion of the Head Judge.

Players can have a judge check their opponent's sleeves at any time during a match, and the Judge may require a change of sleeves to be used if they deem them distinguishable or marked. Players should bring additional sleeves or spare sleeves of the same color in the event they must replace one or more of their sleeves during an event.

#### 3.2.4 Pen and Paper

Players may be asked to fill out and submit physical match slips. In this case, players should have a pen on-hand to be able to do so.

In a game, players may also use a pen and paper to keep track of health totals for themselves and their opponent. In the event of a discrepancy in health totals between the two players, if one player can present a detailed tracking of health totals in line with the visible game state, that total will take precedent when agreeing on health totals.

#### 3.2.5 Supplementary Objects

Players are permitted to use small objects (such as dice or colored beads) to track changes to public information, such as cards, tokens, counters, and targets. Objects that completely cover cards, make it unclear how many of an object is being indicated, or otherwise disrupt the game are not allowed.

Players may not use card sleeves or face down cards sleeved in sleeves that are the same as those used by their Main Deck.

If dice are used to represent game objects, or for a random determination of the first player, they must be unweighted with clear face values. Dice that could cause damage to cards or other tournament property are not allowed. Dice with offensive text or imagery are not allowed.

Any counter, token, or other supplementary object for the game state must be represented in a way that cannot be confused with other game elements.

#### 3.2.6 Playmats

If a player decides to use a playmat, that playmat must fit within the space allotted to them. This is usually space to fit a standard mat of approximately 24" x 14".

Playmats that contain offensive text or imagery are not allowed.

### 3.2.7 Notes

Sometimes a player would like to bring notes to assist them throughout the event. These notes can contain things such as a sideboard guide, meta breakdowns to know what cards they can expect to see, and other relevant information to their deck or decks they might expect to see.

These notes can be referenced in between rounds and in between games during the sideboard process but cannot be referenced during a game.

These types of notes are private information, and do not need to be shared with an opponent. A player should consult a judge prior to the start of the event to make them aware of any notes they have provided and confirm the legitimacy of the notes themselves.

If a player would like to take notes during a game, about various pieces of information regarding the overall game state, they are permitted to do so. These notes cannot be referenced outside of the game they were taken and are public information which must be shown to an opponent if asked.

Players are allowed to have a printed copy of the most recent errata document during gameplay to consult for accurate information regarding the errata of cards. This document may not have any notes written on it prior to the event, and the note taking policy during a game also applies to this document. Regardless of other note taking, a judge or opponent may request to see this document at any time.

### 3.2.8 Electronic Devices

Outside of using devices for checking pairings and reporting match results, the use of electronic devices during a match is strictly forbidden.

At a Tier 1 event, players are permitted to use an electronic device to track health totals during the match but are strongly recommended to track health with pen and paper. Also at these events, players may look up errata information and card rulings, provided the device is always in view of their opponent.

### 3.2.9 Proxies

Only officially printed and released cards by RES may be used in any official event. In the event of a card becoming damaged throughout the course of an event, a judge may issue a proxy to be used to ensure fair gameplay for that player's remainder of the tournament. Only the Head Judge has the authority to issue a proxy of this nature and only for this reason. A card that was damaged or otherwise distinguishable from the rest of the deck prior to the event is not grounds for a proxy to be issued.

### 3.3 Player Knowledge

Players are expected to be fully prepared for their tournaments to give themselves and those around them a better experience. Players may prepare by completing the following actions before attending their event:

- Carefully reading and understanding the cards contained within their deck, including all relevant rulings that apply to those cards.
- Carefully reading and understanding the latest versions of the Basic Rulebook, Comprehensive Rulebook, Tournament Rules Manual, and card errata found at <https://alphaclashtcg.com/>
- Carefully reading and understanding the event details and any event FAQs found at <https://play.alphaclashtcg.com/> or the website of the Tournament Organizer for your event.

### 3.4 Player Behavior

The goal for official RES events is to build a strong player community that allows for learning, fair play, good sportsmanship, and a fun, welcoming environment. All players at these events play a key role in making that goal a reality and a success.

Players are expected to always be respectful and courteous to their opponents and the other participants at an event. Disputes and disagreements should be handled calmly, and tournament staff should always be obeyed. Rude language, disruptive behavior, and/or the disregard for the safety or enjoyment of others or the condition of the venue will not be tolerated.

Players should communicate with judges and tournament staff clearly, cooperate with all instructions, and alert a judge if a violation is noticed at any time.

Players are expected to show up to the tournament and each round on time and report their results in a timely manner following the end of their match. Players maintain responsibility for ensuring their match was reported correctly before the start of the following round and should report any discrepancies to tournament staff.

Players may not wear clothing or use game accessories with any offensive or inappropriate language or images. Players may be asked to change or cover their clothing, or refrain from using certain materials if the content is deemed unacceptable.

Players may not use any electronic devices during a round but may utilize such devices in between rounds or when not in a match. This applies to phones, tablets, smart watches, headphones, music players, and any similar device. Players may utilize an electronic device for notetaking and/or information tracking during Tier 1 events, but only if the device remains in clear view of the opponent. If a player requires an electronic device due to a special

accommodation, that should be communicated to the Tournament Organizer and Head Judge prior to the start of the event.

Wagering or gambling on tournament results is strictly prohibited by anyone, including players, tournament staff and spectators.

Selling goods or services at the event venue is strictly prohibited without the express permission of the Tournament Organizer.

Players must maintain a socially acceptable level of personal hygiene throughout the course of the event.

### 3.5 Player Communication

Players are responsible for relaying accurate information at all times that falls within Status Knowledge or Public Knowledge. Additionally, players are required to answer questions about these categories, and questions relevant to always maintaining a clear game state.

Players should communicate their actions clearly during gameplay, and if any questions arise should ask an opponent or judge to clarify the situation.

If any rules are not followed, or effects are played incorrectly, players should notify the opponent immediately upon noticing, and if necessary, should contact a judge if their intervention is required. Players should request this or any other judge's assistance immediately when a problem presents itself, not wait for a later time.

Players should not touch any cards or other items belonging to an opponent without permission. If permission is not given, a player may ask a judge for any information regarding a card or card effect relevant to the game state.

Players cannot retract or change moves once they are committed to them. Committing to a move is indicated by verbally stating or announcing an action or removing your hand fully from a card. If a verbal statement is made that contradicts a physical action taken in the game, the verbal statement will take precedence and overrule the physical action, provided the verbal statement represents a legal game action.

Failure to follow any of these rules or otherwise fail to communicate with an opponent may result in penalties at the discretion of the judge staff.



## 4 Tournament Play Information and Requirements

### 4.1 Tournament Registration

Players must register for any tournament they wish to participate in. Players should check the event information before registration and contact the Tournament Organizer prior to the event for more information or clarification.

Players should complete their registration through the Clashground online prior to the event. Players may also register the day of the event, provided the event's cap has not been reached. Tournament Organizers may register a player at the event by entering their email address.

### 4.2 Gamesmanship

Players are required to behave in a respectful manner towards all tournament participants, including spectators, tournament staff and other players. Players are also expected to present themselves in an appropriate manner, including maintaining good hygiene and not wearing clothing with offensive or inappropriate text or images. Behaving in an unsporting manner or in a way that endangers or detracts from the event, you may be penalized at the discretion of the judges(s) of the event, up to and including disqualification from the event or removal from the venue.

### 4.3 Special Assistance

Players that require any form of special assistance or accommodations, including designated seating, accommodations for an aide or service animal, the use of electronic devices, or other necessary accommodations should speak to the Tournament Organizer and/or Head Judge prior to the start of the event. Players may also contact the Tournament Organizer in advance to ensure their accommodation can be provided before they register.

### 4.4 Deck Lists and Deck Checks

Tournament Organizers may require deck lists at any Tier 1 event if that information is announced prior to the start of the event. Any Tier 2 or higher event automatically requires deck lists, but this information should still be announced ahead of time.

A complete, legible deck list must be provided by a player to compete in an event that requires it. This list may be written or printed. A player may not use any shorthand terms when writing out a

deck list; a card's full name and the quantity of each card must be clearly written on the deck list. Players that fail to follow deck list rules, or players that fail to accurately represent their deck with their deck list may receive penalties at the discretion of infraction policies and the judge staff. It is ultimately the player's responsibility to ensure they accurately, clearly, and completely communicate the contents of their deck.

The Head Judge should collect deck lists at the start of Round One, before the round has officially begun and players begin play. Once a deck list is submitted, it is considered final and may not be changed unless requested by the Head Judge.

The Head Judge has the right to check a player's deck at any time during the event to ensure their deck is accurate to their list and appropriate for the event. This is known as a "deck check," and should be carried out by Floor Judges whenever possible. Deck checks should be performed on at least 10 percent of decks over the course of the tournament, and each deck belonging to a finals participant must be checked prior to Single Elimination top cut. Even if this would fulfill the quantity required, decks should still be randomly checked during Swiss pairings.

If pulled during Swiss pairings, decks should be checked prior to the start of Game One to ensure the Main Deck and Sideboard are accurate to the list submitted. If players have already drawn their starting hands, judges should ensure that those cards remain separate from the rest of the deck and that the order of the rest of the deck does not change. If the check happens before hands are drawn, the deck can be manipulated however necessary to best check the contents of the deck and properly shuffled before returned to players.

When performing deck checks, judges should ensure that the deck presented matched the corresponding deck list submitted and that the deck is correctly returned to its initial state. They should also check the card quality, sleeve quality, and the contents of the container presented. Any extra cards within the container will be assumed to be a part of the deck unless clearly distinguishable from the deck itself.

## 4.5 Shuffling

Decks must be shuffled thoroughly to sufficiently randomize their contents. Most players must shuffle their decks in a way that is visible to their opponents and must shuffle prior to the start of each game or whenever an effect or mechanic specifies them to do so. You may not look at any of your cards while you are shuffling your deck and may not sort your deck in any way without thoroughly shuffling afterwards.

Due to certain cards becoming clumped together either during gameplay or after a player adjusts their deck with their sideboard, players are permitted to pile shuffle their deck once per game to ensure proper randomization, provided they can do so in a timely manner.

After players have sufficiently shuffled their decks, they must present their deck to their opponent. The opponent may choose to shuffle the deck themselves, or simply "cut" the deck; this is done by separating the deck into smaller piles before combining them back into a singular

pile. If the opponent chooses to shuffle, you may cut your own deck and present it to your opponent a second time. This time, they may only cut the deck again. After your opponent cuts your deck, even without shuffling, the deck can not be manipulated again. Players are strongly encouraged to shuffle an opponent's deck at Tier 4 events but may do so at any tier of event.

When you submit your deck to your opponent, you agree that your deck is properly and sufficiently randomized, is tournament legal and matches your submitted deck list. If a player shuffles their deck in a way that seems suspicious, or you do not believe their deck has been sufficiently shuffled, you may call a judge to either shuffle their deck or observe them while they do so.

Any effect that results in a deck being manipulated, such as a shuffle or a search, should be carried out in separate steps. These effects should be carried out in a timely manner. A judge may issue a penalty if they find a player taking too long to shuffle their deck either before a game begins or when an effect or mechanic specifies them to do so.

#### 4.6 Determining Starting Player

After players have shuffled, before starting hands are drawn, players should use a random method for determining which player will start the first game. These methods can include rolling dice, flipping a coin, or any other similar method of chance. The winner will determine which player goes first.

In any top cut finals match, the player who placed higher after all rounds of Swiss pairings will determine who goes first for the first game.

The player who loses the previous game in a match will determine who goes first in the following game of the match.

If a game loss has been awarded by a judge, that player will determine who goes first for the following game in the match.

#### 4.7 Starting Hands and Mulligan Procedures

Once the starting player has been determined, each player will begin the game by drawing their starting hand of eight cards. In turn order, beginning with the starting player, each player may choose to mulligan and draw a new set of cards.

To mulligan, each player chooses any number of cards from their hand. That player puts those cards back on top of their deck and thoroughly shuffles their deck. After the deck has been submitted to the opponent and finalized, that player then draws the same number of cards they had returned to the deck.

Each player may only mulligan once per game. After both players have completed their mulligans or if they have chosen not to do so, the game can begin. Players can shuffle their decks, determine the starting player, draw their opening hands and mulligan before the timer has begun for the round but cannot begin play until the timer has officially started.

## 4.8 Game Area Layout

Playmats are not required for gameplay, but players are still responsible for ensuring all cards are placed according to the layout provided in the Basic Rulebook. The following locations must be followed and clearly represented at all times during official gameplay:

- Contender Zone
- Clash Zone
- Clashground Zone
- Accessory Zone
- Deck
- Resource Zone
- Oblivion
- Hand

While Standby is not a physical game zone, it is important to represent when a card is in Standby and not confused with cards of the same type in their corresponding game zones.

Players may not create their own or modify game area layout unless accommodations have been made with the Tournament Organizer and/or Head Judge. If these accommodations have been made, you must notify your opponent at the start of the match and ensure your game layout is clear to your opponent and tournament staff.

The position of any card placed face down must be maintained once placed into the game area. Only Trap Accessories may be placed face down into the Accessory Zone and players will face penalties if they are found with non-Trap Accessories face down in their game area.

Players should always play with both hands above the table with only card sleeve backs facing their opponent in a clearly visible manner. Players are not allowed to conceal their hand from their opponent.

Cards in a player's sideboard that are not being used in a game should be kept in their deck case or other appropriate container, with that container remaining in sight of their opponent.

Cards should be placed in a vertical position, with the short edges facing the player and their opponent. If a card must be rotated to indicate a specific effect or game state, that card should be rotated 90 degrees to the side. Cards must be clearly distinguishable between vertical and rotated.

Cards cannot be moved between game areas unless an effect or mechanic directs you to do so.

A player should avoid placing their hand onto the game area close to other specified locations.

## 4.9 Types of Game Knowledge

Communication is important for the successful play of a game with multiple moving parts and intricate interactions. While bluffing maintains an important part of competitive games, clear lines must be established as to what is or is not information players are required to represent. Regardless of whether information is required to be made known to an opponent, players should always communicate to each other politely and with respect, even if that communication is to refuse answering a question or sharing information. Failure to do so may result in penalties for unsportsmanlike conduct.

There are four types of game knowledge to be aware of: Status Knowledge, Public Knowledge, Derived Knowledge, and Hidden Knowledge.

Status Knowledge represents information that must be announced whenever changed and must be physically tracked in some way by the affected player. This method of tracking must be visible to both players. A shared method of tracking may be used provided both players have access to it. Status Knowledge includes:

- Health totals.
- The game score of the current match.

Public Knowledge represents information that all players are entitled to without contaminations or omissions from an opponent. If a player is ever unwilling to provide Public Knowledge, they should call for a judge and explain the situation so that the correct knowledge may be shared without mistakes. Public Knowledge includes:

- Details of the current game actions, cards that have been played this turn, effects that have been activated this turn, or past game actions that still have a continuous effect on the game state.
- The name of all visible objects.
- The number and type of any counter on a game object.
- The state and current game zone of any game object. This includes whether an object is readied or engaged, attached to another object, face down, etc.
- The current step and/or phase the game is in and which player is the active player.
- The number of cards in a player's hand.
- The number of cards in a player's deck.
- The number and names of cards in a player's Oblivion.

Derived Knowledge represents information that all players are entitled to, but that opponents are not obligated to assist with determining. This information might require skill, calculation, and critical thinking to determine. An opponent may not lie or misrepresent any information in this category but may choose to omit information to not assist the player in any way. A player may ask a judge for any information in the Basic Rulebook, Comprehensive Rulebook, Tournament Rules

Manual, or the most current card text. A player may only ask about specific card text that is relevant to the current game state.

For example, if a player asks their opponent about *Menacing Magnate*, that player may answer that the card is a 2/1 Clash card with Flight but is allowed to omit that it has Breakthrough.

Derived Knowledge includes:

- The number of any type of objects present in a public game zone that are not defined as Public Knowledge.
- All characteristics of objects in public zones that are not defined as Status Knowledge or Public Knowledge.
- The contents of the Basic Rulebook, Comprehensive Rulebook, Tournament Rules Manual, card errata and any other information directly pertaining to the current tournament. Cards are always considered to have their most current rules text printed on them, even if the physical card has different information.

Hidden Knowledge is a catchall category for any information to which players have access to only if they can determine it from the current game state and their own record or recollection of previous game action. Players are allowed to provide false information about Hidden Knowledge and the contents of hidden game zones. Hidden Knowledge includes:

- Any information that is not Public Knowledge or Derived Knowledge.
- The contents of a player's hand.
- The contents of a player's deck.
- The identity of face down cards in public zones.

Players must announce any changes to Status Knowledge about themselves. The game score does not need to be announced each time it changes, but it should be recorded to prevent discrepancies. If a player notices a discrepancy in Status Knowledge, either tracked or announced, they are expected to bring attention to it immediately.

Players must answer any specific questions relating to Public Knowledge. A player may not misrepresent Status Knowledge, Public Knowledge, or Derived Knowledge, although they are not obligated to answer fully or at all about Derived Knowledge.

At Tier 1 events, all Derived Knowledge is considered Public Knowledge, and cannot be omitted or misrepresented.

Players are required to answer all questions completely and truthfully if asked by a judge, regardless of the classification of knowledge. A player may request to do so away from the table to prevent sharing unnecessary information with their opponent.

A player is not allowed to search their opponent's hidden zones unless directed to do so by a card effect. A player may not ask a judge to search these zones for any reason, unless there is evidence to suggest a player might be cheating or there is a valid deck issue.

## 5 Determining and Reporting Match Results

### 5.1 End of Round Procedures

If a match does not finish prior to the time being called for the round, both players are responsible for noting who is the active player when that time is called. If a player is in the process of ending their turn when the time is called, the following player will be considered the active player for that game. If time is called in between games, no new games should be started. If a time extension was given by a judge, their time will be called at the end of that duration given.

If time is called while players are in between games, compare the number of games won by each player. If the number of games each player has won is the same, the match is a draw. Otherwise, the player who has won the most games is declared the winner of the match.

If time is called while players are in the process of playing a game, that game must reach an outcome of either win, lose, or draw. Players will have 5 turns, with the active player being considered as Turn 0, or 10 minutes to attempt to naturally resolve their current game, whichever comes first. At the end of either of these measures, the game will end in a draw, and the player with the most game wins will be determined the winner of the match. If both players have the same number of wins at the end of the time extension, the match will be declared a draw.

If a player is currently in their Clash Phase at the end of the time extension, continue play until the end of that Clash and players return to a Primary Phase before determining the outcome of the game/match.

In the event of a single elimination tournament or a timed top cut final, a draw is not allowed if it would create a draw for the match. In these cases, follow the steps below at the end of the time extension provided.

1. If neither player has won the game, the player with the highest Health total will win be declared the winner of the game.
2. If both players' health totals are the same, the player with the highest number of Clash cards in their Clash Zone will be declared the winner of the game.
3. The player with the highest number of non-Clash cards in play wins the game.
4. The player with the most cards in their hand wins the game.
5. The player with the most cards in their deck wins the game.

If, at the end of the time extension for the above specified scenarios, and the players are equal in each of these steps, an additional step is added to this process and play will continue until a winner has been decided.

6. If a player's health total becomes higher than their opponent's health total at any time, that player wins the game.

In an untimed top cut final or the championship match, draws are not allowed, and end of round procedures become unnecessary. Players should continue to play until a clear winner can be determined.

Players should contact a judge if they are unfamiliar with End of Round Procedures, and the judge will explain the situation and the procedure. Judges should be vigilant for slow play during additional time. Judges should also be vigilant for any player found to be abusing End of Round Procedures by slow playing during regular time to take advantage of the situation created for determining a winner. In either case, players may face penalties for these behaviors at the discretion of the judge staff.

## 5.2 Conceding a Game or Match

A player may concede a game or match at any time, prior to the conclusion of that game or match. Once a game or match has concluded, a player may not retroactively concede, or “give the win” to their opponent. Once the result has been reached, either by win, loss, or draw, it cannot be changed, and any attempt to do so will be considered Improperly Determining a Winner and result in appropriate penalties.

Players cannot offer or accept any type of compensation or coerce a player into conceding a game or match. A player who offers compensation will be guilty of Bribery, while the player who accepts it will be guilty of Improperly Determining a Winner. A player using some form of coercion will be found guilty of Unsportsmanlike Conduct, Improperly Determining a Winner, Aggressive Behavior and/or Cheating.

Failing to observe these rules can result in a Match Loss or Disqualification from the event.

## 5.3 Intentional Draws

Players are allowed to intentionally draw a match, provided both players do so of their own accord and without any outside interference or coercion to do so.

Players may not intentionally draw during Single Elimination, Top Cut Finals, or the Championship Match.

## 5.4 Random Outcomes



The use of random outcomes to determine the winner of a game or match is strictly forbidden. Games and matches of Alpha Clash should only be determined by playing Alpha Clash, or through single or mutual concession.

Players found utilizing random outcomes to determine their games or matches will be found guilty of Improperly Determining a Winner and will face penalties accordingly.

## 5.5 Reporting Match Results

Both players are responsible for accurately reporting match results in a timely manner following the conclusion of their match. Tier 4 events will provide physical match slips which must be filled out and submitted. Other events may also require match slips or require players to verbally confirm scores with the Scorekeeper but must make that announcement prior to the start of the event.

Regardless of the form of submission, the responsibility for reporting match results belongs to the winner of the match. The winner of a match should confirm the game score with their opponent and immediately report in the correct manner to the Scorekeeper.

Match results cannot be altered following the submission of the results to the scorekeeper unless a match was reported incorrectly. Results cannot be altered for any other reason. If a match is reported incorrectly, players should notify Tournament Staff immediately so that the results can be adjusted before the following round begins so that future pairings can remain accurate.

## 5.6 Match Pairings

After each match is completed and results have been reported, the Scorekeeper should finalize the results of the round and proceed to the next round. Players should be given adequate time to confirm their results and their standings before proceeding to the next round.

After a reasonable amount of time, the Scorekeeper should progress to the next round and produce pairings. If a mistake in results is caught after pairings are created, the Head Judge can use their judgement when deciding to re-pair or not. Other than the Head Judge making the decision in this scenario, a round may not be repaired for any reason.

If a mistake in reporting is not caught before the following round has been paired and started, it cannot be changed for the rest of the event. For example, if a mistake in reporting is made during Round 2, a player has until the end of that round, and until Round 3 has begun play to catch this mistake and report it to Tournament Staff. Players should be vigilant in making sure their scores are reported correctly, and the Scorekeeper should ensure players can confirm their standings before the new round begins.

In matches with pairing slips, a player's record will be present on those slips with their name, providing an additional way to confirm previous results.

## 5.7 Dropping Out

Players who wish to drop from the tournament should notify the Scorekeeper prior to the start of the next round before pairings have been generated. Once a round has been paired, or after a match has begun, any players wanting to drop are considered to have conceded their match in progress.

Failing to notify the Scorekeeper in a timely manner will result in a player being ineligible for any commemorative or participatory prize support otherwise available at an event.

## 6 Infractions and Penalties

### 6.1 General Philosophy

Mistakes happen in situations where things can get complicated. Games have a lot of moving parts, and it is understandable that mistakes can happen along the way, even unintentionally. Judges are present at events to assist in this, correcting issues as they arise and enforcing rules and policy.

Judges are neutral arbiters and should never interfere with a game unless they believe a rules violation has occurred, a player requests assistance, or they need to prevent a situation from escalating. Judges do not stop an error from occurring, but instead deal with errors that occur. Judges help promote fair play and sporting conduct by example, which can include penalizing those who violate rules.

This is done by both explaining the areas of the rules where a player violated policy and then issuing a penalty to reinforce the situation. The purpose of the penalty is to educate the player in question and prevent the mistake from happening in the future. The penalty also serves as a deterrent and educational tool for other players in the event and allows judges and RES to track player behavior over time across multiple events.

Sometimes players will resolve their own problems without the need for a judge to interfere. If a minor violation is caught and quickly handled correctly by the players involved, a judge does not need to step in. If players are playing clearly to them but unclear to an outsider, a judge may ask them to clarify their game state but otherwise continue playing. In these cases, a judge should ensure that gameplay progresses smoothly.

If more serious violations occur, and players cannot or do not resolve them on their own, the judge should identify which infraction occurred and proceed with the following instructions to apply the appropriate penalty. The Head Judge is the only one allowed to issue penalties that deviate from these instructions but may only do so in significant or exceptional circumstances, or a situation with no precedent or applicable guidance. Situations like a table collapsing are covered by this classification, while situations like the age of a player or a stronger desire to educate over punishment are not. If a different judge believes a deviation is in order, they must consult with the Head Judge.

Similarly, to the players in the event, judges are also human and capable of making mistakes. If a judge makes a mistake, they should acknowledge it, apologize to the players involved and correct the problem if it is not too late. If a mistake of this kind leads a player to commit a violation based on erroneous information, the Head Judge is authorized to downgrade the corresponding penalty. If a player acts on erroneous information during a game, the Head Judge may consider rewinding the game to the point before the act based on erroneous information occurred.

## 6.2 Definitions of Penalties

### 6.2.1 Warning

A Warning is the lowest possible level of infraction able to be given during an event. Warnings are used in situations of incorrect play with a minimal amount of potential impact and those that require fairly small amounts of time to rectify the situation and implement correct procedures.

The purpose of a Warning is to alert players and judges involved that a problem has occurred, and that action has been taken, while allowing a permanent record to be tracked across that and all events.

If it takes longer than a minute to issue the ruling resulting in a warning, a time extension should be issued to compensate for the lost time.

### 6.2.2 Game Loss

A Game Loss is applied in response to severe infractions, or actions that have seriously compromised the integrity of an individual game.

Issuing a Game Loss penalty ends the current game immediately if the players are in the middle of a game, and the player who received the penalty is considered to have lost the game for the purpose of match reporting. If there were to be another game in the match, the player who received the Game Loss penalty chooses whether to be the starting player in the next game of the match. If players have yet to start their match when the Game Loss penalty is applied, neither player may use sideboards for the first game they play, but the affected player will still choose whether to be the starting player in that first game they play.

Game Losses are applied immediately if there is still a game in progress, or to the player's next game if there is not. This penalty can apply to the following round if the affected player has already completed their round.

If a player were to receive multiple Game Loss penalties from various infractions simultaneously, only one Game Loss is applied. If Game Loss penalties are issued to each player in a match simultaneously, these should each be recorded to track patterns and behavior, but should not be applied to the current match results.

### 6.2.3 Match Loss

Match Loss penalties, like Game Loss penalties, are applied when a match itself has been compromised, or severe misconduct has been committed that warrants a stronger decision than a Game Loss or Warning.

Match Loss penalties, again like Game Loss penalties, are applied during the match in which the offense occurred, or the players following match if their current match has already ended.

#### 6.2.4 Disqualification

If a participant's actions damage the integrity of the event as a whole or are representative of severe unsporting conduct, a Disqualification can be issued at the discretion of the Head Judge. Unlike previous penalties, a Disqualification can apply to a Spectator of the event as well as a player within the event itself. No matter who the person being Disqualified from an event may be, the Head Judge should gather their information and include it in their report of the situation so that future events may be aware of the situation.

Disqualification is not an exact science and may not require exact proof of action. So long as the Head Judge determines sufficient information exists that the tournament's integrity may have been severely compromised to warrant the implementation of the penalty, the penalty is allowed to be applied. The Head Judge should include as much information as possible in their report of the situation.

When this penalty is applied, the player loses their current match and is dropped from the event. If the player has already received prizes at the time they receive the penalty, they may keep those prizes but do not receive any additional prizes or awards they would have been due. That player is also removed from the tournament and do not take a place within final standings. This means that all players will advance one spot further than otherwise applicable and are entitled to any prizes awarded to this new standing. If a cut has already been made, such as Top Cut, no additional players may advance into the cut, but their finals standings will be reflective of moving up a position.

### 6.3 Determining an Infraction

Before any infraction and corresponding penalty may be applied, a judge must first investigate the situation, determine the appropriate infraction, and then apply the appropriate penalty and inform/educate the player(s) involved. Judges should never create their own penalties but should apply the most applicable penalty to the situation that arises.

All participants or people involved should explain the situation and answer any questions the judge may have honestly. Once each party has expressed their perceptions of the situation, the judge will explain the overall events and determine if an infraction occurred. If so, the judge will explain the infraction and apply the appropriate penalty, and if not, the judge will explain why the infraction did not occur.

Some more serious infractions and penalties might require further, more in-depth investigation. In these cases, it might be necessary to conduct the investigation, issue the infraction and penalty,

and educate the responsible party in private. If the decision is made to conduct any part of this process in private, that decision must be respected by other players, uninvolved judges, spectators, and tournament organizers alike. Private or public, no matter the size or severity of the infraction or corresponding penalty, a Head Judge has the final say on all matters regarding this issue.

If an infraction has been identified, a judge should confirm with a player whether they have received that same type of infraction at any other point during the event. If repeated infractions occur, penalties may have to be upgraded from anything listed, and the Head Judge should be notified. Players must answer questions about this topic, or any other questions asked by a judge, honestly and fully. Any dishonest behavior regarding judge questioning is against tournament policy and will be penalized.

If an infraction occurs during a match, and the judge call took longer than one minute, an appropriate time extension should be issued to the players involved. This time extension should be noted in writing either on a match slip or other piece of paper that players may keep with them as proof that a judge has intervened. Time extensions should be given after the judge call is fully resolved, including any applicable appeals, and should only be given for actual time lost in a match. Time extensions are not given when a Game Loss penalty is applied. Multiple time extensions may be given to the same match, and a judge should always note the time when a call is originally made so that an appropriate time extension can be given without overcompensating and slowing down the event.

Any infraction and/or time extension should be reported to the Scorekeeper so that the information may be tracked appropriately. Any infraction that occurs during an event that lasts over multiple days will be tracked and carried over to future days of the event.

## 6.4 Issuing a Penalty

It is advised that any penalty more severe than a Warning is only issued after reporting the infraction to the Head Judge. The Head Judge is the only person who should be responsible for penalties of a Match Loss or higher.

When a penalty is issued, it should be done in a way that is respectful of all involved parties. A judge must carefully explain the infraction and how to resolve the situation to the best they can within their power to all related parties. If a Head Judge deviates from the penalties listed for each infraction below, they must fully explain the penalty being applied and their decision making to reach this change in procedure. A judge should carefully consider the implications of deviating from this guideline to ensure the integrity of the tournament, avoid being unwarranted blame towards the judges and Tournament Organizer, and to avoid any accusations of favoritism towards parties involved. Steps for resolving an infraction are listed below to provide the same accountability and consistency to avoid those claims.

Judges must be aware of the current game and overall game state when issuing penalties and resolving infractions. Although this guide is designed to correct errors that occur, one player will be unavoidably more favored by the correction of the issue. A judge should be careful not to favor

one player too strongly, even unintentionally, and to avoid carelessness when making these decisions to not create further issues within the game. If multiple infractions are earned from the same mistake, the penalty should be applied to the most serious infraction only, to not create too complicated of a remedy moving forward.

Penalties may be issued to participants not playing in an event. While the penalties are designed to be applied to players, other participants, such as judges, tournament organizers, and spectators can also be responsible for infractions and penalized accordingly. Penalties may also still be issued to a player even after they have forfeited and dropped out of an event. Penalties should be recorded and tracked by Judges and Tournament Organizers to ensure that penalties are applied consistently regarding their situations and to allow patterns to be tracked if applicable.

The Head Judge maintains the final say on all penalties issued at an event.

## 6.5 Appeals

Players maintain the right to appeal any ruling that does not come from the Head Judge to the Head Judge if they feel the decision made was incorrect or unfair.

Players may not appeal a ruling before it happens, solely because the judge available is not the Head Judge. Players must wait for the ruling to conclude before making an appeal.

If a player would like to appeal the ruling made, they should politely respectfully inform the Floor Judge that they would like to appeal to the Head Judge of the event. If the ruling is accepted, it cannot be appealed later.

The Head Judge's ruling is final and absolute, and as such cannot be appealed.

## 6.6 Examples of Infractions

Infractions can occur in several ways, with differing levels of severity. Based on the level of competition, a Judge can increase the level in which a penalty is issued but never reduce. The types of infractions that can occur are:

### 6.6.1 Gameplay Errors

These can be wrong or inaccurate actions by a player that are contrary to the official rules of the game. It is assumed that errors of this nature are accidental, but a judge may use their discretion to increase the infraction to a higher punishment if they feel the error was deliberate.

**1. Failing to Observe Game Rules**

An infraction in which a player failed to observe a rule or misinterpreted it. Note this is separate from errors resulting from players forgetting to resolve automatic actions.

**Penalty:** Warning

**Resolution:** Issue a Warning to the player(s) responsible for the action. Efforts must be made to reverse the game state to before the error occurred, provided a considerable amount of time has not elapsed. If this is not possible, reverse as far as possible as to not adversely affect one player over another. Continue the game from this point.

**2. Forgetting to Resolve Automatic Actions**

An infraction in which a player proceeds with the game after failing to resolve an automatic effect.

**Penalty:** Warning

**Resolution:** Issue a Warning to the player/s responsible for resolving the automatic action and carry out the effect from the closest checkpoint (based on the judge's determination). However, if the effect was a voluntary action that included text such as "you can", treat the effect as if the player chose not to carry out the action.

**3. Looking at Unnecessary Cards**

An infraction in which a player looks at a card/cards which should not have been visible to them. This also includes voluntarily revealing your hand, or looking at your opponent's hand because they revealed their hand. These actions make tournament environments less enjoyable and should not be encouraged.

**Penalty:** Warning

**Resolution:** Issue a Warning to the player responsible for the infraction. If the card has only been revealed to the player who made the infraction, reveal it to their opponent as well. The judge then confirms which cards require being placed in set orders. Cards which can have no set orders are shuffled together, while cards that must be placed in a set order are returned to their appropriate locations.

*For example, a player accidentally looked at four cards when resolving an effect that asked them to look at the top 3 cards of their deck.*

**4. Invalid Cards in Secret Areas**

An infraction in which there is an incorrect number of cards in a Secret Area, or cards in an invalid state in a Secret Area.

**Penalty:** Warning

**Resolution:** Issue a Warning to the player(s) responsible for the action that caused the invalid cards to be in a secret area. If it is clear (to the Judge's satisfaction) which card/s are incorrectly located in a secret area, those cards must be returned to their correct area. For a card from deck, it is returned to the top of the deck. If it is not clear (to the Judge's satisfaction) which card/s are incorrectly located in a secret area, the Judge is to randomly select the number of cards incorrectly held and return them to the appropriate secret area and sufficiently randomize that area again.



*For example, a player accidentally draws two cards instead of one when starting their turn, or a player accidentally added a card directly to their hand from an effect when they were supposed to reveal the card.*

## 6.6.2 Event Errors

These are errors which occur when player(s) do not adhere to the Floor Rules as outlined in this document. If a Judge determines that the error was deliberate, they may escalate the infraction recorded.

### 1. Tardiness

An infraction in which a player was not seated at the beginning of a match or did not complete a specific action within the given time limit.

**Penalty:**

Warning – if a player arrives within 1 minute of match start.

Game loss – if a player is 1 or more minutes late.

Match Loss – if a player is 5 minutes late.

**Resolution:** Issue a Warning if the player is seated and ready to play within 5 minutes of the round start time. Issue a Game Loss if a player is more than 5 minutes late. Issue a Match Loss if the player is not seated within 10 minutes of the round start time.

### 2. Outside Assistance

An infraction in which information was given to a player from outside the game or actively sought by a player using outside sources of information.

**Penalty:** Game Loss - Match Loss

**Resolution:** If the information is received during a match, issue a Match Loss to the player receiving the information if it has been actively sought. A Game Loss may be issued if it is unclear whether a player actively sought the information out. Issue a Match Loss to the player/s providing any information to a player who is currently playing a match. If the person who gave information is a spectator, a judge may bar that person from spectating for the duration of the tournament. During a match refers to the span of time starting from the posting of pairings to the actual end outcome is reached in a match. At any other time, players can receive information from any source.

*For example, if a player has asked or been unsolicited information from another player or spectator about their game or their opponent, or if a player refers to notes they have prepared before the event during a game in the match.*

### 3. Slow Play

An infraction in which a player unintentionally slows down the pace of a game, either during the match or extra time. If a judge confirms a player deliberately sought to delay the game and use the time limit to their advantage, they may escalate the infraction.

**Penalty:** Warning – Game Loss

**Resolution:** Issue a Warning to the player responsible for the infraction. A judge will determine if the appropriate amount of time has been taken to complete an action or decide to further the game. If there is continued need for a judge to ensure a player takes an appropriate amount of time on decisions or actions during a match, they may escalate the penalty to a Game Loss.

*For example, if a player is taking an unnecessary amount of time to take their next game action, shuffle their deck, determine their next play, or confirm official materials during a match. A good rule of thumb should be that if any action within the game takes a player longer than a minute at a time, but your best judgement should always be used over this example.*

**4. Deck Error: Illegible Deck Lists**

An infraction in which a deck list submitted cannot be read or is incomplete in a way that it makes the task of checking the list during a deck check a difficult task. However, this should not be confused with an incorrect or absent number of cards which is covered under “Incorrect Number of Cards”.

**Penalty:** Warning

**Resolution:** Issue a Warning to the player with the illegible deck list. The player should be given sufficient time to complete the deck list in a way that makes it easier for Judges to check for errors. If this error is found during the event, players should be asked to complete the amendments between rounds. If this causes them to be late to their next round, apply the infraction process for “Tardiness”.

*For example, a player’s list cannot be read to determine the cards in their deck, or a deck list has shorthand, but is otherwise legal.*

**5. Deck Error: Incorrect Number of Cards in Deck / Deck List**

An infraction in which a player’s deck list, or deck, contains the incorrect number of cards either above or below the amount required in the main deck and sideboard.

**Penalty:** Game Loss

**Resolution:** Issue a Game Loss to the player and have them correct the error either in the deck or on their deck list so that the two are made valid.

*For example, a player’s deck list or deck contains over or under the required 50 cards, while the other is correct, or both items contain an incorrect number of cards.*

**6. Deck Error: Incorrect Cards in Deck / Deck List**

An infraction in which a player’s deck does not match the submitted deck list at the time of a deck check.

**Penalty:** Game Loss

**Resolution:** Issue a Game Loss to the player and have them correct the error.

*For example, a player accidentally shuffles an opponent's card into their deck or forgets to un-board after a game and has cards from their sideboard and main deck switched.*

## **7. Illegal Cards in Deck**

An infraction in which the deck produced by the player includes cards that are either invalid for deck construction or are contrary to the rules of the Game (i.e., unofficial cards).

**Penalty:** Game Loss

**Resolution:** Issue a Game Loss to the player found with incorrect cards within their deck. If this is found during a match, the Game Loss is issued for the current game and the player is given time to correct their error if possible. If the error is found between rounds, the Game Loss applies to the next match, and the player must correct the deck before play begins in the next round. Follow the steps for "Tardiness".

*For example, a player has cards that are banned or cards that have not officially been released.*

## **8. Communication Error**

An infraction in which a lack of communication adversely influences gameplay. Both players have the responsibility to play the game with a common understanding of the events occurring within the game. If either player fails to declare their actions sufficiently, that player is treated as if they are obstructing the game.

**Penalty:** Warning

**Resolution:** Issue a Warning to the player responsible for the violation. Then, the judge rewinds the game state back to a point with as few issues as possible. After explaining the situation to the players, let them continue playing the game from that point on. The judge may only rewind the game back to its former state if there is no way to correct the current situation as it is.

## **9. Marked Cards**

An infraction in which cards or sleeves are clearly marked and can be visually distinguished by looking at the card backs or fronts. Care should be taken to view how these cards could be seen when in a secret area.

**Penalty:** Warning – Game Loss

**Resolution:** Issue a Warning if when the cards are examined, one card can be easily distinguished from the next when in a secret area. However, if there is a pattern to the marked cards (i.e., if they are all the same type, or could be important for gameplay), a higher penalty should be given. The player may be required to acquire new sleeves or swap out damaged sleeves with non-damaged sleeves. Consideration of the level of penalty will be made by the Head Judge taking all factors into account. If the Marked Cards are intentional, consider the infraction as "Cheating".

## **10. Insufficiently Shuffling**

An infraction in which a deck was insufficiently shuffled.

**Penalty:** Warning

**Resolution:** Issue a Warning to the player responsible for the violation. The judge thoroughly shuffles the player's deck. The procedure must be carried out in front of the opponent multiple times, with different types of shuffles.

### 6.6.3 Unsportsmanlike Conduct

These are infractions which occur when players behave in an unsportsmanlike way. Players fail to behave in the spirit of the game, and negatively impact on the safety, enjoyment, and integrity of the event.

#### 1. **Taunting or Inappropriate Behavior**

An infraction in which player(s) behave in an inappropriate way or taunts their opponent or other attendees at an event.

**Penalty:** Warning - Disqualification

**Resolution:** Determine the appropriate penalty and issue to the player(s) responsible for the behavior. This can include bullying and other forms of behavior which may belittle another person present at the event.

*For example, a player might make an undeniably rude comment to an opponent, trash the play area, or repeatedly carry out an action that is perceived negatively after being asked to stop. A player might also seek out penalties for their opponent or attempt to instigate their opponent into committing unsportsmanlike conduct themselves.*

#### 2. **Threatening, Aggressive, or Discriminating Action**

An infraction in which player(s) engage in anti-social behavior which threatens or demeans another person in attendance to the event. This can include, but is not limited to, making threats or physical violence against another person, or discriminating against a person based on their sex, age, sexual orientation, gender, socio-economic status, intellectual ability, or disability.

**Penalty:** Disqualification

**Resolution:** Issue a Disqualification to the player(s) responsible and ask that they immediately leave the event. This may also be escalated to a Suspension upon further investigation by the Tournament Organizer and RES.

*For example, a player might make a derogatory remark, verbally threaten another person, performs a violent act, or damages/destroys either player or tournament property.*

#### 3. **Theft**

An infraction in which a player steals event equipment or the belongings of other players. A player should feel safe about their belongings when participating in an event, but this does not mean they are not responsible for their personal items. Players are expected to

keep items they brought to the event or received during the event on their person at all times. Judges must provide whatever support they can to prevent such incidents.

**Penalty:** Disqualification

**Resolution:** Issue an immediate Disqualification to the player and remove them from the venue. This may also be escalated to a Suspension upon further investigation by the Tournament Organizer and RES.

#### 4. **Collusion and Bribery**

An infraction in which a player bribes or colludes with their opponent to get them to concede, draw, or otherwise compromise the integrity of match results and the tournament overall. These infractions also include receiving a bribe, or betting on match results with other players or spectators during an event.

**Penalty:** Disqualification

**Resolution:** Issue a Disqualification to the player(s) or person(s) responsible.

*For example, a player may offer an opponent something of value to concede a match or intentionally draw a match. Players could make an offer to split prize in return for a favorable outcome. Spectators or players could bet on the outcome of a match.*

#### 5. **Cheating**

An infraction in which a player knowingly contravenes the rules of the game or tournament policies; makes mistakes intentionally for attempted personal gain; or knowingly cheats. These acts can appear to be unintentional and must be thoroughly investigated by Judges to ensure whether the actions were deliberate or not. This may also be escalated to a Suspension upon further investigation by the Tournament Organizer and RES.

**Penalty:** Disqualification

**Resolution:** Issue a Disqualification to the player(s) found to be meeting the definition of this infraction.

*Examples of cheating can include realizing that your deck contains invalid or illegal cards, but refusing to bring it up to a judge, lying about in game situations to receive a favorable outcome from a judge, intentionally ignoring an opponent's mistake until bringing up the mistake can directly benefit you, or intentionally performing actions which allow you to gain an advantage over an opponent.*

#### 6. **Players Under the Influence of Drugs or Alcohol**

An infraction in which a player is determined to be under the influence of drugs, alcohol, or other substances. This is deemed to be anti-social behavior and against the spirit of the game.

**Penalty:** Disqualification

**Resolution:** Issue a Disqualification to the player(s) who a Judge has determined to be under the influence of drugs, alcohol, or other substances. This may also be escalated to a

Suspension upon further investigation by the Tournament Organizer and RES if the behavior leads to an unsafe environment.