

# Scrabble Fest 2023 Tournament Rules

Must be 18 years old to play.

The regular rules of Scrabble will be followed. Each game has a thirty-minute time limit. Each table will have two Scrabble boards; up to three (3) players can play per board. The player that scores the highest number of points at the end of the three (3) games is declared the tournament champion.

Tournament Score Keepers will collect and tabulate the scores from each player at the end of each round. They will then post the individual player scores on the Tournament Scoreboard.

Gaming supplies used will only be those provided by Literacy Volunteers of Chautauqua County. Scrabble boards, tiles, tile bags, score sheets, scrap paper, and pencils will be made available for players for use at Scrabble Fest. Use of materials not provided may disqualify a player.

Cell phones may NOT be used as a dictionary nor for word lists and must be SILENCED for the duration of all play.

## Game Rules

In SCRABBLE®, teams form interlocking words, crossword fashion, on the board using letter tiles of different values. Each person competes for high score by taking advantage of the letter values as well as the premium squares on the board.

## SETUP

Turn all letter tiles facedown at the side of the board or pour them into the bag and shuffle. Each player or a designated member of a team, draws a tile to determine first play. The player drawing the letter nearest the beginning of the alphabet plays first. A blank tile supersedes all the tiles.

- Return the exposed letters to the pool and reshuffle. Each person then draws seven new letters and places them in their rack.

## GAME PLAY

The first player combines two or more of their letters to form a word and places it on the board to read either across or down, with one letter on the center \* square. Diagonal words are not permitted.

A player completes a turn by counting and announcing the score for the turn (or when **their 3 minutes** have expired.)

- The player then draws as many new letters as played, always keeping seven letters in their rack.

Play alternates between players or moves clockwise around the board. Each player, in turn, adds one or more letters to those already played to form new words. All letters played in a turn must be placed in one row across or down the board, to form one complete word. If, at the same time, they touch other letters in adjacent rows, they must form complete words, crossword fashion, with all such letters.

- The player gets full credit for all words formed or modified on their turn.

New words may be formed by:

- Adding one or more letters to a word or letters already on the board.
- Placing a word at right angles to a word already on the board.
- The new word must use one of the letters already on the board or must add a letter to it.
- Placing a complete word parallel to a word already played so that adjacent letters also form complete words.

No letter may be shifted after it has been played.

The two blank tiles may be used as any letters. When playing a blank, the player must state which letter it represents. It remains that letter for the rest of the game.

- The blank may not be removed from the board and replaced with a lettered tile.

A player may use a turn to exchange all or some of the letters in their rack. To do this, place the discarded letters(s) facedown. Draw the same number of letters from the pool, then mix your discarded letters with those in the pool. This ends your player's turn.

- A player may also pass a turn by making no play and saying, "Pass".
- A score of zero is received for this turn.

All words labeled as a part of speech (including those listed of foreign origin, and as archaic, obsolete, colloquial, slang, etc.) are permitted except: words always capitalized, abbreviations, prefixes and suffixes standing alone, words requiring a hyphen or an apostrophe.

- Proper names are not allowed with the exception of event sponsors.
- Abbreviations are not allowed with the exception of event sponsor abbreviations.
- Hyphens and apostrophes are not allowed.
- The maximum word length is 10 letters.

The Official SCRABBLE® Players Dictionary, Seventh Edition, will be used for challenges. Any word may be challenged **before** the next player starts a turn by notifying a Word Judge.

- If the word challenged is unacceptable, the challenged player takes back their tiles and loses that turn.
- **While the judges are determining the validity of the word, the clock stops for the players at that table. The clock resumes when the challenge is resolved.**

A timer will be provided at each game board to time the turn. Turns last 3 minutes.

## ENDING THE GAME

The game ends when:

- All letters have been drawn and one player uses their last letter,
- When all letters have been drawn and no one can play,
- All possible plays have been made by all players, or

- When time for the round is over.

A 5-minute warning will be called near the end of play for each round. Once “STOP” has been called the game is over and players may not put down any tiles.

- The individual timers should be stopped and not be reset until a Judge has picked up all scoring sheets.
- Players should not “square up” their tiles until they have filled out and signed their scoring sheets.

## SCORING

**Each player should keep a score sheet for all players at the table. Score sheets will be verified and initialed by each player at the end of the game and turned in to the scorekeeper.**

Keep a tally of each player’s score, entering it after each turn. The score value of each letter is indicated by a number at the bottom of the tile. The score value of a **blank is zero.**

The score for each turn is the sum of the letter values in each word formed or modified on that turn, plus the additional points obtained from placing letters on premium squares.

Premium Letter Squares: A light blue square **doubles** the score of a letter placed on it; a dark blue square **triples** the letter score.

Premium Word Squares:

- The score for an entire word is **double** when one of its letters is placed on a **pink square**.
  - It is **tripled** when one of its letters is placed on a **red square**.
  - Include premiums for double or triple letter values, if any, before doubling or tripling the word score.
    - If a word is formed that covers two premium word squares, the score is doubled and then re-doubled (4 times the letter count).
- NOTE:** the center \* score is a pink square, which doubles the score for the first word.

Letter and word premiums **count only on the turn in which they are played.** On later turns, letters already played on premium squares count at face value.

When a blank tile is played on a pink or red square, the value of the word is doubled or tripled, even though the blank itself has no score value.

When two or more words are formed in the same play, each is scored. The common letter is counted (with full premium value, if any) for each word.

**Any player who plays seven tiles on a turn, scores a premium of 50 points after totaling the score for the turn.** This is called a “Bingo.”

### **UNPLAYED LETTERS**

When the game ends, each player’s score is reduced by the sum of their unplayed letters. In addition, if a player used all of their letters, the sum of the other player’s unplayed letters is added to that player’s score.

### **HOW TO WIN**

**The player with the highest combined point score for all 3 rounds wins the tournament and the \$150 prize.**

**Second place is \$100.**

**Third place is \$50.**



## Tips for Players

The winners will be determined by total points, not games won, so generally choose high-scoring plays over defensive moves.

Blank tiles, which can be used instead of any letter, are extremely valuable for 50-point-bonus "bingo" plays (using all the tiles on your rack), so do not squander them on low-scoring moves. The same holds true, to a lesser degree, for the "X" and "S" tiles, in particular.

Aim, when possible, to make plays that leave good tiles in your hand, so that you have a better chance of a bingo on your next play.

Don't be afraid to give up a turn by exchanging weak tiles, such as a rack of six or seven vowels (keep an "E," exchange the rest). In the long run, you will usually score more than if you have to make several low scoring plays in a row because of bad racks. Again, total points will determine winners.

The letters RETINAS, plus the blank, are the best letters in the bag for making bingos.

Play quickly when possible. You want to be sure to get as many plays as possible made before time expires, so as to get the highest score.

Be careful about making challenges unless you're SURE the other player's play is not a word, or if it's such a high-scoring play that you feel you have to take a risk. Otherwise, it may be better to make sure that you don't lose a turn.

Most importantly, HAVE FUN and remember you are supporting a good cause – literacy efforts in Chautauqua County.