

Judging at Regular Rules Enforcement Level (REL)

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Most **Magic™** players play for fun and see a tournament as a social event. Regular REL (Rules Enforcement Level) encourages a welcoming atmosphere and friendly competition. As judges, we should be friendly and involved, sometimes playing in events ourselves. Like players, we are encouraged to help at appropriate times, such as during deck construction or between matches. Judges are the last word when a dispute or question arises, and we should be as impartial and diplomatic as possible.

Magic is a complicated game and mistakes occur. While we can't prevent players from making mistakes, we can do our best to fix the situation as fairly as possible. It is important that players know that when help is needed or something goes wrong, calling a judge is the best course of action. Focus on educating the players and keeping the game going rather than worrying about the impact on the game. You should intervene if you see something illegal happen in a match, but beyond this you have a lot of room to tailor your actions. For example, whether you step in when you see a player miss a trigger should be determined by the tone you want to strike for your event – it may be appropriate to provide this extra help in a more casual environment, but not appropriate if your play group is more competitive.

When answering a question, don't be afraid to double check the rules if you aren't sure of your answer and give the players extra time at the end of their match to compensate. If a player accidentally breaks a rule, apply the best remedy described below (intentionally breaking a rule is a Serious Problem). If your situation isn't covered here, use common sense to make the best ruling you can. The fixes found in other documents (such as the Infraction Procedure Guide) are designed for a stricter environment and don't apply at Regular REL. In addition to fixing the error, it is important to remind the players to play more carefully. Avoid being heavy-handed as you want to keep your events fun and relaxed. A player continuing to make the same mistake despite repeated reminders may be warned that the next occurrence will result in a Game Loss. Hopefully this final step will not be required, but knowing it is possible should get the player to correct their behavior.

If your event requires decklists, provides large prizes, or is otherwise of a more competitive nature, it may be better to run it at Competitive rather than Regular REL. This will require use of the full Infraction Procedure Guide instead of this document, so make sure you're familiar with it before trying a higher REL.

Common Issues

A player forgets a triggered ability (one that uses the words “when,” “whenever,” or “at” usually at the start of the ability's text).

These abilities are considered missed if the player did not acknowledge them in any way at the point that it required choices or had a visible in-game effect. If the ability includes the word “may,” assume the player chose not to perform it. Otherwise, add it to the stack now unless it happened so long ago that you think it would be very disruptive to the game - don't add the ability to the stack if significant decisions having been made based on the effect not happening! Unlike other game rule errors (which must be pointed out), players are never required to point out their opponent's missed triggered abilities, although they may do so.

A player sees a card in a library that he or she shouldn't have seen

This is easily fixed by shuffling the card seen into the unknown portion of the library. Make sure to check if any player knows of any cards in the library (because an effect sent them to the bottom, for example), and ensure your fix preserves those cards.

A player accidentally draws more cards than he or she was supposed to

If the identity of the card(s) were known to all players, return them to their proper location. Otherwise, determine how many extra cards have been drawn, take that many cards at random from the player's hand and place them on top of the library. If the extra cards were drawn while drawing the opening hand, shuffle the extra cards back into the deck instead and allow the player to continue making mulligan decisions.

A player makes an in-game error not mentioned above

This will cover the bulk of player errors, and we will usually leave the game as it is. Fix anything that is currently illegal (e.g. an Aura enchanting an illegal permanent) and continue the game. If the error was

caught quickly and rewinding is relatively easy, you may choose to undo all the actions back to the point that the illegal action happened. This can include returning random cards from the hand to the library to undo card draws (though don't shuffle the library if you do this) and reversing various other actions (such as untapping permanents and declaring attackers or blockers). Don't go crazy with this!

A player has illegal, insufficient, or another player's cards in his or her deck

Remove any cards that shouldn't be there and put back any cards that should. Then, if the deck contains insufficient cards, add basic lands of the player's choice to bring it to the correct size. Any cards that are added to the deck should be shuffled directly into the library. If the error was discovered during a draw effect, have the player complete the draw effect after the deck is fixed and shuffled. Encourage players to count their deck and present their sideboard (face down) to their opponents before starting a game.

General Unwanted Behaviors

- ♣ Players taking unreasonable amounts of time sideboarding or making play decisions.
- ♣ Inadequate shuffling.
- ♣ Asking for or providing strategic advice during a match or draft.
- ♣ Tardiness.

Educating players who exhibit these behaviors should be your primary motivation as a judge. It can be useful to reinforce this education with more stern penalties should a player's unwanted behaviour continue, especially in cases where players are likely to upset others. A player that is more than 10 minutes late to a match is considered to have forfeited the match and should be dropped at the end of round if he or she is still absent.

If you have warned a player who may be upsetting others and your warning has not curbed their behaviour, or if a player is being threatening or aggressive, these situations are Serious Problems.

Serious Problems

Certain actions will not be tolerated under any circumstances. Every effort should be made to educate players before and during events; however, ignorance is not an acceptable defence of these actions. Any player engaging in the following must be removed from your event and, at the Organizer's discretion, removed from the venue entirely:

- ♣ Aggressive, violent or abusive behavior (physical or verbal).
- ♣ Intentionally and knowingly breaking or letting an opponent break game or tournament rules, or lying. ("Bluffing" about cards opponents can't normally see is permitted).
- ♣ Determining match outcomes by incentives, coercion, or outside-the-game methods, or gambling on any part of a tournament.
- ♣ Theft (including things like replacing a card in a draft with one from a player's binder).

Removing players in this way is called a Disqualification, and we must always try to educate our players on why these actions are unacceptable. Also let the player know that while your decision is final, the Judge Program would still like to hear his or her side of the story. You can contact your local Regional Coordinator, high level Judge, or WPN Representative to guide you through the process of a Disqualification.

Resources

Got questions? Try apps.magicjudges.org, or if you need an answer right now, chat.magicjudges.org.

This document is intended to give you the basics for judging an event at Regular REL. Further resources can be found at http://wiki.magicjudges.org/en/w/Judging_at_Regular_REL

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