

## Judging at Regular Rules Enforcement Level (REL)

*Updated September 26, 2014*

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. Our demeanor should reflect this, whether we are playing, judging or both. Players and judges are encouraged to help one another 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. While we can't prevent players from making mistakes, we should do our best to fix situations 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. Our solutions should 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 can exercise your discretion. 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 less so if your play group is more competitive.

When answering a question, feel free to double check the rules if you aren't sure of your answer. Remember to give the players extra time to finish their match to compensate for the time taken by the ruling. 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. If a player accidentally breaks a rule, use the remedies described below and your common sense as guidance to make the best ruling you can. Intentionally breaking a rule is cheating and is a Serious Problem (see below). If you feel that the suggested remedy is not well adapted to your particular situation and you can suggest a more appropriate fix which is accepted by both players, apply that fix instead. Player education is a priority; remind the players to play more carefully, but avoid being heavy-handed in order to keep your events fun and relaxed. If a player continues to repeat a mistake despite multiple reminders, you may warn them 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 deck lists, 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 the beginning”, usually at the start of the ability's text)**

These abilities are considered missed if the player did not acknowledge the ability 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, use your judgement to decide if putting the trigger on the stack now would be too disruptive - don't add it to the stack if significant decisions have been made based on the effect not happening! Unlike other illegal actions (which must be pointed out), players may choose whether or not to point out their opponent's missed triggers, though we should encourage them to do so.

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

Shuffle the card seen into the unknown portion of the library. If any player legally knows the position of any cards in the library, ensure that your fix preserves the positions of those cards.

#### **A player accidentally draws has 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. Don't shuffle the library after doing this! If the extra cards were drawn while drawing an opening hand, shuffle the extra cards back into the deck instead and allow the player to continue making mulligan decisions with the remaining cards.

#### **A player makes an in-game error not mentioned above**

This will cover the bulk of player errors, and usually the least disruptive option is to leave the game as it is after fixing anything that is currently illegal (e.g. an Aura enchanting an illegal permanent). If the error involved a player forgetting to draw or discard cards, have them perform the appropriate action now. Otherwise, if the error was caught quickly and rewinding is relatively easy, you may 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), untapping permanents and undoing combat. This can be very disruptive where lots of decisions have been made or hidden information has been revealed since the illegal action, so 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 in the deck, put back any cards that should, then add basic lands of the player's choice if the deck is below the format's minimum size limit. 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 to avoid these errors.

### **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.

As a judge, the priority is to educate players who exhibit these behaviors. It can be useful to reinforce this education with more stern penalties such as a Game Loss should the unwanted behaviour continue. 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.

Regular REL is many players' first experience of tournament Magic, so ensuring a welcoming and inclusive atmosphere is important. A player whose behaviour may be upsetting others or making them uncomfortable should be educated and asked to stop immediately. If they make no attempt to correct their behaviour, applying a Game Loss may reinforce the seriousness of the issue. If this does not stop the behaviour, or if a player is being threatening, aggressive or harassing other players, 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, harassing or abusive behavior (physical or verbal).
- ♣ Intentionally and knowingly breaking or letting an opponent break game or tournament rules, or lying, in order to gain an advantage. "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](http://apps.magicjudges.org), or if you need an answer right now, [chat.magicjudges.org](http://chat.magicjudges.org).

The Magic Tournament Rules give more information about how to run tournaments at any REL, and can be found at: <http://wpn.wizards.com/en/document/magic-gathering-tournament-rules>.

Further resources are available at [http://wiki.magicjudges.org/en/w/Judging\\_at\\_Regular\\_REL](http://wiki.magicjudges.org/en/w/Judging_at_Regular_REL)

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