

# FoW TCG - Official General Tournament Policy

## 1. Document Information

### 1.1 Version Information

This version of Official Tournament Policy was updated August 9<sup>th</sup>, 2014. The most up-to-date version may be found at [www.fowtcg.it](http://www.fowtcg.it).

This document may be updated at any time, with or without notice. It is the responsibility of players and tournament officials to ensure they are using the most up-to-date version of this document at all times.

### 1.2 Purpose and Use

This document outlines rules and procedures governing all FOW sanctioned tournaments. These rules exist to ensure that all players have fair tournament experience.

In addition to Official Tournament Policy, the following documents exist:

**Force of Will Trading Card Game Specific Floor Rules**

Outlines rules and procedures specific to the Force of Will Trading Card Game.

**Force of Will Penalty Guidelines**

Explains tournament infractions and the penalties associated with them.

## 2. Tournament Information

### 2.1 Minimum Number of Players

A minimum of four players is required for individual events. This applies to all tournaments.

### 2.2 Rounds and Top Cut

The number of rounds in a tournament and the top cut, if there is one, are determined by the number of players. Every round is played with matches at Best 2-of-3. The following chart should be used to determine the appropriate number of rounds. In extreme cases, such as venue closing times, tournament organizers may alter the number of rounds in the tournament, provided they make the change known to all players at the beginning of the tournament.

Swiss Rounds Chart		
# of Players	# of Rounds	Cut
4-8	3 Rounds	Top 2
9-16	4 Rounds	Top 4
17-32	5 Rounds	Top 8
33-64	6 Rounds	Top 8
65-128	7 Rounds	Top 8
129-256	8 Rounds	Top 8
257-512	9 Rounds	Top 8

## 2.3 Event Tier Levels

Events are divided into four tiers which are representative of the approximate difficulty of the tournament relative to other tournaments. The tiers are as follows:

**Local:** Includes Sneak Previews, Store Championships and other sanctioned local events.

**Regional:** Includes Regional Grand Prix.

**National:** Includes National Grand Prix

**World:** Includes the World Grand Prix.

## 2.4 Event Competition Levels

Events fall into one of two competition levels: Competitive and Standard. Competitive Level events include:

- Regional Grand Prix
- National Grand Prix Trials
- National Grand Prix
- World Grand Prix

In addition, some Public Events at conventions, or at the National Grand Prix and World Grand Prix, are considered Competitive Level. Players wishing to determine the Event Competition level of a Public Event may ask the Head Judge.

Standard Level events are any event that is not explicitly listed as being a Competitive Level event.

## 2.5 Eligible Players

Most FoW sanctioned tournaments are open to all players in good standing. Tournament organizers may not arbitrarily prohibit players from participating in events they sanction.

Some tournaments may be age-restricted; meaning only players within a certain age range may participate. Some higher-level events may require invitations in order to participate. Examples of such tournaments include World Grand Prix. For each tournament that requires an invitation, invitation requirements will be announced well ahead of time.

Players who meet any of the following criteria may not participate in sanctioned tournaments:

- Any tournament official, including the judge staff, scorekeeper, or tournament organizer of the tournament. Local level events are an exception to this rule.
- FoW TCG employees unless the tournament has been advertised to include play against FoW TCG employees. Local level events are an exception to this rule.
- Employees of partner companies with prior knowledge of card sets for games managed or associated with their companies cannot participate in events where prior knowledge of cards would provide benefit, such as Sneak Previews.
- Players who have been suspended by Force of Will Co., Ltd because of policy violations.

## **2.7 FOW ID**

All players wishing to participate in sanctioned FoW TCG events must obtain a FOW ID. Tournament organizers can provide players who do not already have one with a FOW ID at any sanctioned tournament. Players wishing to register for a FOW ID will be required to fill out a short registration online form.

Players should be sure to bring their FOW ID with them to all sanctioned events.

Photocopies, memorization, and digital storage (such as entering it into a mobile phone) are acceptable ways to bring FOW IDs to events.

Players may have only one FOW ID. It is the responsibility of every player to ensure that they do not register for more than one FOW ID. If a player forgets their FOW ID, tournament staff may be able to look it up. In the case of a player discovering that he or she has more than one FOW ID, he or she should immediately contact the Force of Will Co., Ltd to have the numbers combined.

## **2.8 Tournament Sanctioning and Reporting**

Tournament organizers who wish to sanction their tournaments should download the latest version of FOW Tournament Software. This software will be used to sanction, run, and report sanctioned tournaments.

Records of all sanctioned tournaments, either in electronic or paper form, should be kept for a minimum of six months after the conclusion of the tournament in case of player history disputes.

Sanctioned tournaments are reported through the Tournament Software. All sanctioned events must be reported within 14 days of the tournament's conclusion. Organizers who routinely report tournaments late or fail to report them may lose their privilege to sanction tournaments.

## **2.9 Event Information and Promotion**

Force of Will Co., Ltd reserves the right to publish tournament information, such as the contents of a player's deck, photographs, interviews, or video footage of official FOW events at any time for any reason. Tournament organizers may also publish this information after the conclusion of their events.

## **3. Tournament Match Information**

### **3.1 Pre-Game Procedures**

The following steps must be performed before each game begins:

1. Players must prepare two decks: the Main Deck and the Magic Stone Deck. Both players must shuffle and present their decks to their opponent. (See section 3.2 for proper shuffling techniques.)
2. Prior to the first game of the match, players must determine who will go first. (See section 3.3 for procedures for determining who will go first.)
3. Players may shuffle their opponents' decks. This step is required at Competitive Level events. Shuffling the opponent's deck is final and no further actions are necessary.
4. Each player draws 5 cards from his Main Deck. Starting with the player who will play first, if a player doesn't like his or her opening hand, he or she may mulligan once. To mulligan, that player chooses any number of card from his or her hand and put them on the bottom of his or her Main Deck, then draws that many cards from his or her Main Deck.
5. Each player removes 4 cards from his or her Main Deck and stacks them face down in the Life Break Area, keeping the same order.
6. Players place a Ruler card in their Ruler Area, simultaneously.

## 3.2 Shuffling and Randomization

Anytime a player is required to shuffle a deck, that player must randomize the deck.

Randomization is defined as using a variety of shuffling techniques to bring the deck to a state where the order or distribution of any card in the deck is unknown to any player.

Common shuffling techniques include the riffle, mash and pile shuffle. It is important to note that pile shuffling alone is **not** a technique that provides sufficient randomization and should never be used by itself. Although cutting the deck can be used as part of shuffling, by itself it is not a technique that provides sufficient randomization.

Players have three minutes to shuffle and present their decks at the beginning of each game; this includes side decking (when applicable) and mulligans. When shuffling during a game, such as after a search effect, players have 30 seconds to shuffle and present.

Once the deck is shuffled, it must be presented to an opponent. By doing so, players are implying their decks are legal and sufficiently randomized. The opponent has the option to either shuffle that deck further, or accept the deck as is. There is no longer a cut involved with deck shuffling. If the opponent shuffles the deck, then there is nothing more to be done and that deck is given back to its owner. At Competitive Level events, players *must* shuffle their opponent's decks when presented to them.

If a player does not believe their opponent made a reasonable effort to randomize their deck during shuffling, that player must notify a judge immediately.

Decks may be in any configuration before shuffling. Players must shuffle their decks at the match table as any shuffling done away from the table cannot be verified by the opponent.

Stacking the deck, or illegally manipulating the position of any card in the deck, is considered cheating and should be dealt with as described in the penalty guidelines.

## 3.3 Determining Who Plays First

At the start of each match, before the beginning of the first game, players must use a random method, such as flipping a coin or rolling dice, to determine who plays first. For each subsequent game in a match, the player who lost the previous game chooses which player goes first. In the case of a game draw, the player who chose who played first the previous game chooses who will play first in the next game.

Players who do not specify who they chose to play first before looking at their opening hand are assumed to have chosen themselves to play first.

### 3.4 Match Outcome

A match outcome is not considered final until the match result has been reported to the scorekeeper. In most cases this will be when the match result slip is turned in to a tournament official. At local level events with few players, this may be when the players verbally report the result to the scorekeeper.

Players may concede a game or match for any reason, provided they do not accept compensation for their concession. Offering or accepting a bribe is grounds for disqualification, as described in the penalty guidelines.

Players may not randomly determine the outcome of a match.

### 3.5 Match Draws

Matches in FOW sanctioned tournaments may end in draws. If players are still playing when time in the round is called, refer to end of match procedure for the game to determine the winner of the match. Players may not choose to end a match in a Draw intentionally. Intentionally ending a Match in a Draw, or stalling to have a Match end in a Draw, is against tournament policy and could result in a Disqualification.

### 3.6 Tiebreakers

During the course of a Swiss tournament, some players will accumulate the same number of match wins as other players. A tiebreaker system will be used and applied to accurately rank players in the tournament.

It's used a method to track how strong or weak your tournament schedule has been. It tracks the record of each of your opponents, and the record of your opponent's opponents to determine the final tiebreakers. This number can be portrayed as follows:

AABBBCCC

AA Total amount of Points the Player has earned during the course of the tournament.

BBB Your opponents' match-win percentage.

CCC Your opponent's opponents' match-win percentage.

**Example:** A Player at a National Grand Prix event has a tie-breaker number of 21693596.

The number breaks down as follows:

21 (AA): Total amount of points the Player earned during the tournament.

693 (BBB): Their opponents' match-win percentage.

596 (CCC): Their opponent's opponents' match-win percentage.

### **3.7 Note Taking**

Players may take any notes they wish during a match and may refer to those notes at any time, provided that note taking does not interfere with the pace of play. Any notes taken are public information, but they do not have to be understandable. Notes taken outside a match, including side decking notes, may not be consulted during a match.

### **3.8 Outside Assistance**

Players may not ask for or receive assistance from outside sources during a sanctioned match. This includes, but is not limited to, asking for or receiving advice from spectators or other players, either verbal or nonverbal, and referring to notes taken outside the match.

### **3.9 Ruling Appeals**

Players, who believe that an assistant floor judge has made an incorrect ruling, have the right to appeal to the head judge. The head judge's ruling cannot be appealed. In all cases, the head judge must be physically present at the match in question to answer the appeal.

### **3.10 Prize Splits**

Players playing in single-elimination finals may choose to split prizes. Only prizes offered to first and second place may be negotiated in the prize split; nothing may be added from outside the official, advertised prize pool, including cash and additional product. Players may never concede for prizes. All negotiations must be done in the presence of the head judge. After split negotiations, a player may choose to drop prior to the final match in order to preserve their rating. In such cases, the remaining player in the tournament wins vs. a bye in the final round.

### **3.11 Marked Cards**

Players are responsible for ensuring that their cards are in good condition and have no marks that would make any card distinguishable from other in the deck by looking at the back. Sleeves are considered extensions of the card. Any card in a sleeve that is marked is considered marked. It is recommended that players check their cards and sleeves frequently over the course of the tournament to ensure that they have not become damaged or marked.

Players may modify the face of their cards, provided that the modifications do not obscure the picture or text significantly or make the card identifiable while in a deck. What modifications are considered significant is at the sole discretion of the head judge of a tournament. Players wishing to use modified cards should consult the head judge before playing with them.

### **3.12 Sleeves**

Players are encouraged to sleeve their decks to avoid damaging their cards. Any sleeves are legal for FOW sanctioned tournaments, provided they meet the following guidelines:

- Sleeves must be identical in all ways. This includes, color, picture alignment (if the sleeves have images on them), manufacturer, length, and amount of wear.
- Sleeves must not be reflective.
- Sleeves must not obstruct the face of the card in any way.
- Each card may only be sleeved in one sleeve.

Players should be sure to change their sleeves often to avoid wear and damage that may mark their cards. When sleeving a deck, it is advised that players shuffle both the new sleeves and the deck beforehand to avoid marking patterns in the case of a manufacturing error that may mark the cards.



### **3.13 Counterfeit Cards and Proxies**

Counterfeit cards are illegal and never allowed in sanctioned tournaments. If a player discovers counterfeit cards at an event site or elsewhere, he or she should bring them to the attention of Force of Will Co., Ltd. as soon as possible. At an event, counterfeit cards may be reported to any tournament official.

Proxies, cards meant to represent other cards, often photocopies, are considered fake and are not allowed in sanctioned tournaments. In rare instances, such as damaged cards in a limited event, the head judge may allow a player to play with proxies.

### **3.14 Wagering**

To preserve tournament integrity, players and tournament officials may not wager on the outcome of any sanctioned match.

## **4. Responsibilities**

### **4.1 Common Responsibilities**

All event attendees share the following responsibilities:

- Be familiar with and follow all tournament policies applicable to the game and format being played.
- Act in a respectful manner at all times. This includes avoiding the use of profanity and refraining from making offensive comments or gestures.
- Avoid wearing inappropriate or offensive clothing.
- Avoid interfering in a match in progress. Judges may answer rules questions and resolve game issues.
- Avoid discussing an ongoing match with other spectators when within earshot of the game.
- Notify a tournament official in a timely manner and in good faith if a player is observed failing to follow any game or tournament rules or incorrectly tracking game score or life totals during a match, regardless of whom the error benefits.
- Follow instructions given by any tournament official.

## **4.2 Player Responsibilities**

Players are responsible for the following in addition to common responsibilities:

- Ensure they only register for one FOW ID.
- Clearly communicate moves they make during game play.
- Keep their hands and cards above the table during matches.
- Notify an opponent if he or she fails to follow any game rules or incorrectly tracks game score or life totals during a match, regardless of whom the error benefits.
- Notify a judge in a timely manner and in good faith if he or she observes a failure to follow any game or tournament rule during a match, regardless of whom the error benefits.
- Avoid insulting other players, their strategies, and their play skills.
- Maintain accurate information for their FOW ID.

## **4.3 Assistant Judge Responsibilities**

Assistant judges aid the head judge in ensuring a fair tournament environment. Assistant judges are responsible for the following, in addition to player responsibilities:

- Be physically present at the tournament.
- Maintain an expert level of knowledge of all game and tournament rules.
- Arrive at the tournament site at least 30 minutes before the first round begins, or when instructed by the head judge.
- Observe the tournament area and players at all times.
- Perform deck checks quickly and accurately when required.
- Wear appropriate attire that clearly distinguishes him or her from players and spectators.
- Avoid showing favoritism to any player or team.
- Quickly and efficiently resolve any rules errors that he or she witnesses.
- Ensure that all tournament penalties are reported to the scorekeeper.
- Ensure that match results are verified by both players and reported quickly.

## **4.4 Head Judge Responsibilities**

The head judge is the final arbiter of disputes during a tournament. The head judge's rulings cannot be appealed. The head judge issues rulings, manages the tournament staff, and keeps the tournament running smoothly. Head judges have the following responsibilities in addition to the responsibilities of assistant judges:

- Be physically present and available throughout the tournament.
- Ensure the scorekeeper prepares the next round pairings quickly.
- Ensure the start and end of a round are clearly and efficiently communicated to all players and judges.

- Be available to moderate rulings which players have appealed.
- Ensure all judges are properly listed in tournament software.
- Ensure assistant judges are aware of their responsibilities and duties.

## **4.5 Tournament Organizer Responsibilities**

Tournament organizers arrange tournaments and work to ensure that they run smoothly and successfully before, during, and after the event. A tournament organizer may not play in a tournament he or she organized, with the exception of Local tier events. Tournament organizers have the following responsibilities:

- Make arrangements for the venue, staff, and materials needed to successfully run the tournament. This includes securing the venue in advance, finding judges willing to volunteer at the event, and ensuring the site is equipped with tables, chairs, tablecloths, table numbers, printer and paper, a computer with tournament software, a time clock, and so on, as appropriate.
- Ensure the tournament is officially sanctioned in advance and reported within fourteen (14) days of its conclusion.
- Communicate appropriate dress requirements to all tournament officials and judges for the event.
- Appropriately reward tournament officials and judges for exceptional service.
- Ensure all prize payouts, tournament entry fees, tournament start times and tournament rules are clearly advertised before the tournament begins.

## **5. Conduct Unbecoming**

### **5.1 Definition**

If players or spectators violate the responsibilities outlined above or commit tournament infractions that result in disqualification may be suspended by the Penalty Committee. The length of the suspension depends on several factors, including the severity of the infraction, the player's willingness to cooperate with the investigation, and player history. Suspension lengths and common infractions that incur them are outlined below. The Penalty Committee may determine that the infraction does not fall into any of the categories and may issue a suspension for a length of time that they feel is appropriate.

## **5.2 Conduct Unbecoming – 1 Year**

- Unsporting Conduct: Cheating
- Unsporting Conduct: Severe
- Failure to Obey Tournament Official's Instructions
- Obstruction of Investigation
- Playing under a Fraudulent Name or FOW number
- Presence at Tournament Venue While Suspended
- Tournament Fraud

## **5.3 Conduct Unbecoming Major – 3 Years**

- Theft
- Harassment
- Violent Behavior
- Vandalism
- Severe Tournament Fraud

## **5.4 Conduct Unbecoming Severe – 5 years or more**

- Assault
- Severe Violent Behavior