

V:EKN Judges' Guide

2011 Tournament Season

Effective January 1, 2011

Introduction

The V:EKN Judges' Guidelines (formerly called 'Penalty Guidelines') provide a structure to help judges resolve play errors and determine the appropriate penalty for infractions that occur during the course of a tournament. Penalties exist to protect players from potential misconduct. All penalties in this document (with the exception of section 160) assume that the infraction is unintentional. If a judge believes that an infraction was intentional, the penalty should be upgraded as appropriate (see section 160). Please remember that these are only guidelines. If the judge believes that the situation has significant, extenuating circumstances, he or she is free to modify the penalty as appropriate.

Note: See appendix B of the V:EKN Tournament Rules for definitions of terms in this document.

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10. Format of Infractions

Infractions are listed in the following manner:

- Infraction Type, Infraction Name - The category and designation of the infraction.
- Definition - The description of what qualifies as an infraction.
- Example - Sample incidents of the infraction.
- Philosophy - The reasoning behind the penalty.
- Penalty - Recommended penalty.

20. Definition of Penalties

Caution: This is the smallest penalty that can be given. A caution is a verbal warning to a player. The caution must explain the infraction and the consequences if the infraction is repeated. A caution should be reported to the head judge, but does not need to be tracked on paper.

Warning: A warning is an officially tracked penalty. The purpose of a warning is to alert judges and the players involved that a problem has occurred and to keep a permanent record of the infraction in the V:EKN Penalty Database. Warnings must be communicated to the head judge and the tournament official responsible for the permanent tracking of the warning. Warnings must also be communicated to the player, explaining the infraction as well as possible consequences if the infraction is repeated.

Game Loss: A warning is always given with this penalty. If the player is between games, the loss should be applied to the player's next game. A Game Loss is recorded as a loss to all active players and tied with any other players who have a Game Loss. If the penalty occurs in the middle of a game, the judge should award pool and/or Victory Points to the player's Predator, or making other arrangements to preserve game balance for the remaining players, as warranted

(possibly awarding partial VPs). Game losses must be communicated to the head judge and the tournament official responsible for the permanent tracking of the warning. Judges must communicate game losses to the player and explain the infraction and possible consequences if the infraction is repeated.

Disqualification: A warning is always given with this penalty. When this penalty is applied, the player loses his or her current match and is dropped from the tournament. Players will still receive whatever prizes they have earned before the disqualification. In certain situations, a disqualification without prize is appropriate. A disqualification without prize is defined as a disqualification with the player receiving no prizes and receiving no additional awards (such as professional points, event invitations, and so on). Disqualification without prize is recommended for severe Unsportsmanlike conduct and cheating. Disqualifications must be communicated to the head judge and the tournament official responsible for the permanent tracking of the warning.

30. Applying Penalties

The Penalty Guidelines apply to every sanctioned event, but certain infractions may not apply to certain events. For example, events that do not use decklists will not use decklist-related penalties. If a decklist error is discovered during play, the penalty should be applied immediately. For example, if a player notices his or her opponent playing with a banned card, a penalty should be applied immediately. If players bring an infraction to the attention of the judge, a penalty should be applied for that infraction in the round in which it occurred, whenever possible.

40. Repeat Offenses

The recommended penalty for the first offense is listed in the "Penalty" portion of each infraction. For the second offense of the same infraction, the next highest penalty is recommended. Note that this increase of penalty follows the order of:

Caution -> Warning -> Game Loss -> Disqualification

If a baseline penalty is a warning, the second offense should receive a game loss, and the third offense should receive a Disqualification. For example, a player's penalty for the first offense of Card Drawing—Looking at Extra Cards would be a caution. The player's penalty for a second offense would be the next highest, which is a warning. His or her third offense would result in a game loss, and fourth offense would result in the player's disqualification. Disqualifications that are the result of accumulated infractions are not disqualifications without prize. At the judge's discretion, a level of penalty may be repeated before escalating to the next level. For example, an inexperienced player has a habit of holding his cards below the table. After receiving a caution from the judge, the player later repeats the infraction. The judge may choose to issue an additional caution rather than escalating to a warning.

100. Deck Problems

This section generally deals with deck problems and related issues for Constructed and Limited tournaments.

101. Deck Problem - Illegal Decklist

Definition:

This penalty applies to tournaments in which decklists are being used.

Players are considered to have an illegal decklist when one of the following conditions is true:

- The decklist contains an illegal number of cards.
- The decklist contains cards that are illegal for the format.

Examples:

(A) A player in a Constructed tournament has 58 cards listed on his decklist when the minimum is 60.

(B) A player in any tournament lists Madness of the Bard (a banned card) on his decklist.

Philosophy:

The decklist is the ultimate guide to a player's deck. If the decklist lists an illegal deck, the player is playing with an illegal deck, regardless of the actual contents of his or her deck. However, it is not in the best interest of the event to disqualify players for illegal decklists.

Penalty:

Warning. The general philosophy is to correct a player's decklist so it is legal, and let the player continue playing. The head judge should correct the decklist to reflect the actual contents of the deck (if the main deck itself is legal). If the main deck is illegal both with the decklist and the physical main deck, the penalty is **Game loss**, and the head judge should allow the player five minutes to make the decklist legal and ensure the main deck matches the corrected decklist.

102. Deck Problem - Illegal Main Deck (Legal Decklist)

Definition:

This penalty applies to tournaments in which decklists are being used. This penalty applies to players who have misplaced cards from their deck or have cards from a previous game in their deck.

Players are considered to have an illegal deck when one of the following conditions is true (while the decklist still indicates a legal deck):

- The main deck contains an illegal number of cards.
- The main deck contains cards that are illegal for the format.
- The contents of the main deck do not match the decklist.

Philosophy:

The decklist is the ultimate guide to a player's deck. If the decklist indicates a legal deck, but the actual contents of the deck do not match the decklist, the player should restore the deck to reflect the decklist. If the judge can determine with complete confidence that the deck/decklist discrepancy is due to an error on the decklist (a player is using an all Gangrel deck and has Campground Hunting Ground listed on the decklist instead of Zoo Hunting Ground), he or she may decide to fix the decklist instead. A warning should be issued in this case.

Penalty:

Game loss, and then be instructed to make any changes necessary to make the contents of the deck match what is recorded on the decklist. The changes must be complete before the next round begins for the player to continue in the tournament.

103. Deck Problem - Illegal Main Deck (No Decklist Used)

Definition:

This penalty applies to tournaments in which decklists are not being used.

Players are considered to have an illegal main deck when one of the following conditions is true:

- The main deck contains an illegal number of cards.
- The main deck contains cards that are illegal for the format.

Example:

(A) A player in a constructed tournament has 58 cards in his deck when the minimum is 60.

(B) A player in any tournament has Madness of the Bard (a banned card) in his deck.

Philosophy:

If the deck contains an illegal selection of cards in some manner, the player is playing with an illegal deck. However, it is not in the best interest of the event to disqualify players for illegal decks.

Penalty:

Game loss. Judges and other tournament officials must be vigilant about reminding players before the tournament begins of the consequences of playing with an illegal deck.

When decklists are not being used, the general philosophy is to correct a player's deck and allow the player to continue playing in subsequent rounds. The head judge should work with the player to correct the deck. All illegal cards should be removed immediately. If cards need to be added to make the deck legal, the judge should require the player add only simple cards like Master Discipline cards and Forced Awakening, etc. - not specific counter cards like Gangrel Atavism, for example. If cards need to be removed to make the deck legal, then random cards should be removed in order to make the deck legal.

110. Procedural Error

This section provides penalties for procedural errors. Many infractions fit into this category, although it is impossible to list them all. The head judge should use his or her discretion when deciding which penalty applies to an unlisted procedural error.

111. Procedural Error - Minor

Definition:

A Minor Procedural Error occurs when a player performs an unintentional, slightly disruptive action at the tournament.

Example:

- (A) A player fails to provide a reliable method to track her pool totals.
- (B) A player shuffles his deck after an opponent has cut it.
- (C) A player repeatedly holds her cards below the table.

Philosophy:

Procedural errors vary significantly. The judge should adjust the penalty appropriately to reflect the level of tournament disruption.

Penalty:

Caution. If the procedural error makes it impossible for a player to effectively continue the game, then upgrade the penalty to **game loss** as needed.

112. Procedural Error - Major

Definition:

A Major Procedural Error occurs when a player performs an unintentional, disruptive action at the tournament.

Example:

(A) A player replaces cards in his sealed deck with copies of the same card without permission from a judge.

(B) A player does not sufficiently randomize her deck before presenting it to her opponent.

Philosophy:

Procedural errors vary significantly. The judge should adjust the penalty appropriately to reflect the level of tournament disruption.

Penalty:

Warning. If the procedural error makes it impossible for a player to effectively continue the game, then upgrade the penalty to **game loss** as needed.

113. Procedural Error - Severe

Definition:

A Severe Procedural Error occurs when a player performs an unintentional, extremely disruptive action at the tournament.

Example:

(A) A player spills his drink on his deck and is unable to continue the game effectively.

Philosophy:

Procedural errors vary significantly and the judge should adjust the penalty appropriately to reflect the level of tournament disruption.

Penalty:

Game loss.

114. Procedural Error - Misrepresentation

Definition:

A player is considered to have committed this infraction when he or she unintentionally misplayed a card or a game rule.

Example:

(A) A player attempts to play Dread Gaze on a referendum that one of his vampires called.

(B) A player attempts to play Frenzy during his own turn.

(C) A player plays Art Museum when she doesn't have any ready Toreador.

Philosophy:

This penalty assumes an unintentional action on behalf of the player. If the judge believes the misrepresentation was intentional, see section 160 - Cheating.

Penalty:

Caution.

120. Card Drawing

This section includes infractions relating to inappropriate card drawing, card viewing, and related topics.

121. Card Drawing - Drawing Extra Cards

Definition:

Players are not considered to have drawn extra cards when they place a card face down on the table (without looking at the card) in an effort to accurately count out cards as they draw. This penalty should be applied only once to one or more cards if they are drawn in the same action or sequence of actions, at the judge's discretion.

Philosophy:

Any time players draw extra cards, there is always a chance they will go unnoticed by their opponent, potentially giving them a significant advantage. Because of this potential for abuse, the penalty for drawing extra cards is fairly severe. A player can accidentally look at extra cards very easily, so a separate, less severe penalty is established for that infraction called Looking at

Extra Cards (section 122).

Correcting the problem always involves putting the extra card (if known, or a random card from the player's hand if not known) back in the deck and reshuffling the deck, unless some other player has, through the course of the game, gained a knowledge of some portion of the player's deck, in which case the card should simply be returned to the top of the deck without shuffling. This ensures that the game will be impacted as little as possible.

Improper Drawing at Start of Game (section 123) is also a separate, less severe penalty.

Penalty:

Warning. For the game to continue, the situation should always be corrected. When it is obvious which extra card was drawn, the card should be placed back in the deck. If it is unclear which card is the "extra" card, a random card should be selected from a player's hand. The opponents of the player committing the infraction should be allowed to see any cards the other player has seen due to this infraction.

An automatic **game loss** should be applied if a player has drawn so many cards that a judge is unable to correct the situation.

122. Card Drawing - Looking at Extra Cards

Definition:

This could include dropping cards on the floor, turning a card over while shuffling an opponent's deck, or revealing cards from their deck in the act of misplaying a card. This penalty also applies when a player has looked at a card in an opponent's deck or hand in the course of a game (such as turning over an extra card while resolving a random discard effect).

A player is not considered to have looked at extra cards when he or she places a card face down on the table (without looking at the card) in an effort to count out cards he or she will draw.

This penalty should be applied only once to one or more cards if they are seen in the same action or sequence of actions.

Example:

(A) A player accidentally flips over a card while shuffling her opponent's deck.

(B) A player flips over an extra card while drawing from his deck.

(C) A player looks at the bottom card of his deck when presenting it to his predator for cutting/shuffling.

Philosophy:

A player can accidentally look at extra cards very easily so the penalty is less severe than Drawing Extra Cards. Drawing Extra Cards is a separate, more severe penalty because of the increased potential for abuse. The card seen should be shuffled back into the deck or placed on top of the deck as appropriate (see 121) if it was the top card of the deck that was seen, or returned to the area where it came from otherwise.

Penalty:

Caution. In addition to the appropriate penalty, the situation should always be corrected.

An automatic **game loss** should be applied if a player has seen so many cards that a judge is unable to correct the situation or has received too much of an advantage by seeing an extra card (for example, the player sees the next card which reveals some crucial, strategic information).

123. Card Drawing - Improper Drawing at Start of Game

Definition:

Players committing this infraction draw an extra card (or too few cards) when they draw their hand or uncontrolled region cards.

Philosophy

This is generally a minor infraction and deserves a fairly minor penalty. Forcing players to redraw their hands with one less card is fairly quick and simple and avoids the possibility of a player gaining an advantage if he or she just had to reshuffle his or her cards and draw a new hand.

Penalty:

The player must shuffle his or her hand into the deck and redraw the opening hand, drawing one less card than the number he or she should have drawn - not the number he or she actually drew. His or her hand size should be restored to the normal amount after every player has taken a turn. If the error was in drawing too many crypt cards for the uncontrolled region (and looking at them), the reduced draw (of three uncontrolled vampires) is corrected by drawing the fourth vampire from the crypt after every player has taken a turn.

124. Card Drawing - Failure to Draw

Definition:

A player does not draw a card that he or she was required to draw.

Philosophy

This is generally a minor infraction and deserves a fairly minor penalty.

Penalty:

Caution. Players must correct the situation by drawing back up to their hand size.

130. Marked Cards

This section deals with marked cards or sleeves. As always, the penalties for these infractions assume the infraction was unintentional. If the head judge feels the markings are intentional, he or she should refer to section 160 - Cheating

131. Marked Cards - No Pattern

Definition:

A player's cards are marked with no pattern to the types of cards that are marked. If a player is using opaque sleeves, they are taken into consideration instead of the actual cards. If a player is using clear sleeves, both the card and sleeve are taken into consideration.

Example:

(A) A player in a tournament has small marks on a few of his sleeves. The markings are on an Ascendence, a Dodge, and a Scouting Mission. The judge decides this is not a significant pattern.

Philosophy:

The possibility for advantage is fairly low when there is no pattern to the markings.

Penalty:

Caution.

132. Marked Cards - Observable Pattern

Definition:

A player's cards are marked with a pattern to the types of cards that are marked. If a player is using opaque sleeves, they are taken into consideration instead of the actual cards. If a player is using clear sleeves, both the card and sleeve are taken into consideration.

Example:

(A) A player in a tournament has Jyhad-backed reaction cards in an otherwise all V:TES-backed library.

(B) A player in a tournament has four Kiss of Ra in her deck, all of which are in card sleeves that have a slight bend in one corner.

Philosophy:

The potential for advantage is high when there is a pattern to the markings. Therefore the penalty must be significant. Please note this penalty still assumes that the cards are marked unintentionally. Refer to section 160 - Cheating, if the judge believes that the cards were marked intentionally.

Penalty:

Game loss.

140. Slow Play

This section includes penalties for players who unintentionally play slowly.

141. Slow Play - Playing Slowly

Definition:

Players who take longer than is reasonably required to complete game actions are engaged in slow play. If a judge believes that a player is intentionally playing slowly to take advantage of a time limit, that player is guilty of Stalling (section 162).

Example:

(A) A player is unsure of with which minion to block, and spends five minutes trying to decide.

Philosophy:

Slow Play penalties do not require a judge to determine whether a player is intentionally stalling. All players have the responsibility to play quickly enough so their opponent is not at a significant disadvantage because of the time limit. A judge should take into consideration the tournament scores when deciding if this should be upgraded to a Stalling penalty.

Penalty:

Caution. In addition to the penalty, the judge may assign extra time to the game if he or she feels

it is appropriate. The option to add extra time should be used sparingly in order to avoid tournament delays.

142. Slow Play - Exceeding Pre-Game Time Limit

Definition:

A player exceeds the time limit for completing his or her pre-game steps.

Example:

After three minutes into a round, the player has not completed his shuffling.

Philosophy:

This penalty assumes the player is not intentionally stalling. If the head judge believes it is intentional, refer to section 160 - Cheating, instead.

Penalty:

Caution. A one-minute time extension is included with the penalty.

150. Unsportsmanlike Conduct

This section deals with Unsportsmanlike conduct at tournaments. A player does not have to be actively involved in a game to receive a penalty for Unsportsmanlike conduct.

151. Unsportsmanlike Conduct - Minor

Definition:

Minor Unsportsmanlike Conduct is defined as behavior that may be disruptive to a person at the tournament, but has no significant impact on the operation of the tournament in any way.

Example:

(A) A player uses inappropriate language.

(B) A player loudly demands to a judge that her opponent receive a penalty.

Philosophy:

Different levels of Unsportsmanlike conduct should be penalized accordingly. The head judge is always the final authority on what constitutes Unsportsmanlike conduct and is free to interpret

the guidelines as he or she sees fit for the appropriate situation.

Penalty:

Warning.

152. Unsportsmanlike Conduct - Major

Definition:

Major Unsportsmanlike Conduct is defined as behavior that is disruptive to a player or players at the tournament, but does not cause delays or include any form of physical contact or significant emotional distress.

Example:

(A) A player repeatedly calls a judge and argues that an opponent should lose the game for insignificant procedural oversights.

(B) A player fails to obey the instructions of a tournament official.

(C) A player refuses to play a game.

Philosophy:

Different levels of Unsportsmanlike conduct should be penalized accordingly. The head judge is always the final authority on what constitutes Unsportsmanlike conduct and is free to interpret the guidelines as he or she sees fit for the appropriate situation.

Penalty:

Game loss.

153. Unsportsmanlike Conduct - Severe

Definition:

Severe Unsportsmanlike Conduct is defined as behavior that is disruptive to a player or players at a tournament, causes delays, and may include any form of physical contact or significant emotional distress.

Example:

(A) A player pulls a chair from beneath another player, causing her to fall to the ground with a

minor injury.

(B) A player argues in an excessive and belligerent manner with a judge after the judge has made a final ruling.

Philosophy:

Different levels of Unsportsmanlike conduct should be penalized accordingly. The head judge is always the final authority on what constitutes Unsportsmanlike conduct and is free to interpret the guidelines as he or she sees fit for the appropriate situation.

Penalty:

Disqualification without Prize.

160. Cheating

This section deals with intentionally committed infractions that can give a player a significant advantage over others.

161. Cheating - Bribery

Definition:

A player attempts to bribe an opponent into changing the results of a game by offering inducements outside of the current game.

Example:

A player offers an opponent cash or cards to throw a game.

Philosophy:

Players in the finals of a tournament should not be considered in violation of this rule as long as they meet the following criteria:

- No player introduces incentives outside the current game such as cash, cards, prizes, or other items. (For example, an offer to split the prizes would not be acceptable.)
- All players involved in all affected games agree on the outcome.

Penalty:

Disqualification without Prize.

162. Cheating - Stalling

Definition:

A player intentionally plays slowly in order to take advantage of the time limit. Refer to section 141 for unintentional slow play.

Examples:

(A) A player has no options available to significantly affect the game, and spends several minutes "thinking" about what to do.

(B) A player whose library is known to have no more equipment in it takes actions via Vast Wealth to use the remaining time in the round searching and shuffling the library for the purpose of preventing his opponent from getting another turn.

Philosophy:

If it is clear that a player is stalling, he or she should face a serious penalty. A player need not be playing slowly to be guilty of stalling. If the player is just performing idle activity for no purpose other than to take advantage of a time limit, this can also be considered stalling (e.g. using Vast Wealth on every turn even when no more equipment can be found just to spend time "searching" the library and shuffling it.) In addition to issuing any appropriate penalties to the stalling player, the judge may add an appropriate amount of time to the round to compensate for time lost due to stalling. The time added should not be more than the approximate amount of time lost due to the stalling violation. Any time added to the round must be immediately announced.

Penalty:

Game loss.

163. Cheating - Fraud

Definition:

A player intentionally misrepresents rules, procedures, personal information, or any other relevant tournament information.

Example:

A player uses a fake name and V:EKN number when registering for a tournament.

Philosophy:

There should be zero tolerance for this type of activity.

Penalty:

Disqualification without Prize.

164. Cheating - Collusion

Definition:

Players agree to alter, predetermine, or otherwise illegally establish the results of a game.

Examples:

A player agrees to let his friend oust him without offering resistance in order to improve the friend's standings in the event.

With two players remaining, each agree to flip a coin to determine which player will concede the game.

Philosophy:

Players participating in standard table talk or in-game agreements should not be considered in violation of this rule as long as they meet the following criteria:

- No player introduces incentives outside the current game such as cash, cards, or other items.
- No part of the agreement has been secret or has taken place outside of the current game.
- No part of the agreement involves a random selection of the winner.
- The agreement does not otherwise violate section 5.2 of the V:EKN Tournament Rules.

Penalty:

Disqualification without Prize.

200. Correction of Game State

This section generally deals with returning the game to a fair and playable state after certain types of infractions. Only the judge may make corrections to the game state. Correction of the game state is done in addition to and not instead of the application of the appropriate penalty for the infraction.

Philosophy:

It is important that the player committing the infraction receive no benefit in the game for doing so. If no significant game actions have taken place, play should be backed-up to the point of the error. The error should then be corrected and the game should proceed forward from that point. If significant game actions have taken place (such as having too many cards played and/or replaced), the judge may choose to leave the game undisturbed or may adjust the game state in some other way (for instance, altering pool or blood levels) since players have made play decisions based on the subsequent state of the game.

Examples:

(A) During his master phase, a player realizes he did not make the decision to pay for a contested card.;

Resolution: In this case, very little has transpired since the error was made. The player backs up to his untap phase, chooses to pay or give up the contest, then continues his turn. Once the turn continues he may choose to make the same or different plays continuing forward from this point.

(B) At the end of a lengthy turn involving several complex combats, a player realizes he did not make the decision to pay for a contested card.;

Resolution: In this case, too much has transpired since the error and it would not be possible to rewind play to that point. In this instance, the judge decides to have the player immediately make his choice of whether or not to pay for the contested card, and then have play continue from the point where the error was realized.

(C) Several turns after the occurrence, the players realize that a player had a vampire burned in combat from a strike card that the other player could not have legally played.

Resolution: In this instance, too much has transpired and no easy way to rewind play presents itself. The judge returns the burned vampire from the affected player's ash heap to the ready region with 1 blood. The affected player would have had the vampire during his prior two turns so the judge puts two blood on the vampire to simulate the gain from two successful hunt actions. Play resumes from the point where the players realized the error.

210. Event Organization

This section generally deals with organizational issues relating to the practical functions of running a tournament.

211. Event Organization - Unexpected Drop

Description:

Player leaves the event.

Resolution

- For 5-Player table, change the table to a four-player table.
- For 4-Player table, re-distribute players to new tables to create legal table sizes.

The judge **must** take care that the changed seating arrangements conform to the V:EKN Tournament Rules SEC 3.1.2.

If the dropout causes the event to have an invalid number of players, the event becomes unsanctioned. Between rounds, modifications can be made (judge can play, etc.) to maintain sanctioning.

If the drop occurs before the start of the first round and the event becomes unsanctioned due to not being able to generate legal table sizes, White Wolf prize support should not be distributed at the event. Events that become unsanctioned due to drops occurring during the event may still distribute prize support as normal. Submit the Archon or event report as normal, indicating in the notes what transpired at the event. The unsanctioned event will not count toward player ratings.

212. Event Organization - Venue Interference

Description:

Venue forces modification of round times.

Resolution

Modify round times to accommodate venue concerns. Event becomes unsanctioned if any round time limit is less than 2 hours in duration and any game ends due to the time limit. If a round with a time limit of less than 2 hours is completed without any tables going to time, the event will retain sanctioning. Note venue problems in event report. Distribute prize support as normal if you are able to complete the event.

The V:EKN Judges' Guidelines are based on the applicable portions of the DCI Universal Penalty Guidelines for the 1999-2000 Tournament Season.

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