

# MGI Handbook

## **Preamble:**

All MGI tournaments are run with WESPA rules. WESPA rules cover a lot of code of conduct in relation to cheating and unethical behaviors by players

However, in cases where the current WESPA rules do not capture certain infringements, our MGI-events-specific rules and code of conduct will apply.

Also prescribed in this MGI Handbook are some minimum levels of discipline, ethical standards and etiquettes always required of all players and officials during all MGI scrabble tournaments, especially the MSPL.

We have also taken time out to summarily describe how the MSPL and other MGI tournaments will be administered.

## **1. Overview /Introduction**

Objectives of the MGI Scrabble Premier League (MSPL)

Our long-term objective is to provide different professional platforms where the very top scrabble players can compete for honors and get rewarded.

The MSPL is one of such platforms

## **2. Branding and Sponsorship:**

All current MSPL teams have registered their team's name, players and logo with the organisers. Future MSPL teams will be required to do same.

There are no restrictions on the residencies of players that teams can recruit. Players can reside anywhere and play for any team of their choice and convenience.

There are CURRENTLY no restrictions placed by the organizers on the branding/sponsorship prospects of teams as ALL teams are allowed to design their own customized/branded jerseys, souvenirs and game accessories without any encumbrances. However, there may be need to review this policy in the future as the league grows to full maturity.

It is the tradition of the league - and will continue to be so - that the organizer will host all league teams and invited guests to a gala night on the final weekend of the MSPL

MGI is currently making plans for media briefing sessions with team owners and captains at the opening weekend of the league.

## **3. League Structure**

The MSPL is currently a 2-tier league system - division 1 where players with rating points of 1350 and above can compete and division 2 where only players with rating points of 1349 and below can compete EXCLUSIVELY

Some top payers in division 1 may be seeded by the organizers at the beginning of a season and those players will not be allowed to play for the same team. This measure is aimed at balancing the relative strength of teams.

While division 1 teams may choose to field players with rating points lower than 1350, division 2 teams can only accommodate players with rating points lower than 1350, to the complete exclusion of players whose rating points are higher.

Both Division 1 and Division 2 presently consist of 12 teams with 6 registered players each, with only 5 players allowed to represent the team on each match day.

The MSPL is currently still in the early growth stage. As such, there's currently still room to expand the number of teams in each division and possibly additional tiers to accommodate as many interested players/team owners as possible who believe in the MGI vision and want to be part of it.

League matches are spread over 4 match days. Each match day is played on a scheduled weekend during a calendar year. There is a 3 month-time interval between a Match Day and the next. Thus, the league will run for 9 months i.e., Match Day 1 to Match Day 4.

#### **4. Team Composition**

- a. Each team to register 6 players for the league season: 5 main players and 1 reserve player
- b. Team owner(s) may choose to recruit other staff like manager, coordinator to manage their team.
- c. NSF ratings will be adopted to determine rating cut-off points to determine players' eligibility for the different divisions.

#### **5. Team Registration**

At the end of every season, MGI will officially call for EOI (Expression of Interest) to participate in the next season. The EOI will be open to ALL current and ANY prospective teams. And such interested teams will be required to do so on or before the stipulated deadline.

However, priority will be given to existing league teams where the number of teams that can participate in the league is limited.

Upon approval of a team's EOI, team owners will be required to make payment and submit the following information

- 1) Team Name
- 2) Team Logo
- 3) Team Mantra - where applicable
- 4) Name of all team members
- 5) Photo of all team members
- 6) Name of team manager if any
- 7) Name of team captain
- 8) Name of team owner(s)
- 9) Contact details for team

Approved teams will be expected to make payment into a designated bank account and fulfil all requirements on or before a stipulated deadline. Failure to do so may result in team disqualification and a replacement team shall be sought to complete the number for the season.

Team registration will be confirmed by MGI after all registration terms & conditions must have been met.

## **6. Team Owners Responsibilities**

- a. Recruit responsible players to participate in the league
- b. Mandated to have a written team agreement documented and signed by players
- c. Sign MSPL contractual agreement with MGI
- d. Fulfil responsibilities to their players in accordance with team agreement
- e. Present a complete team of 5 players for league matches on all match days
- f. Submit at least 3 clocks/timers to MGI on all match days. Failure to do so will attract fine from MGI

## **7. Players Responsibilities**

- a. Players must comply with the terms & conditions as stipulated in the written team agreements between them and their respective team owners
- b. Players must comply with MSPL rules & regulations
- c. Players are expected to fully commit to league schedule and programs

## **8. MGI's Responsibilities**

- a. Provide enabling environment for the players on all match days
- b. Provide game equipment (except clocks/timers to be submitted by teams) where possible on match days.
- c. Communicate important and relevant information to teams, players, sponsors as at when due
- d. Engage competent TDs and support officials to manage the MSPL
- e. Seek rating approval from NSF and WESPA for the MSPL where necessary
- f. To maintain decorum during league matches

## **9. Players Eligibility for Each Season**

- a. A player must be in good standing with NSF and must not be under any ban
- b. A player must be licensed with MGI for the league year (starting from 2022 league season)
- c. A player may reside anywhere in world if they will commit to league schedule for the season

## **10. MSPL Replacement and Transfer Policy (starting from 2022 season)**

### **10.1 Replacement of Player**

> A team may only replace 1 player in their team for the current league season except in extra-ordinary circumstances.

Such extraordinary circumstances include:

- Death of a player
- Terminal or debilitating illness of a player
- Permanent disability of a player
- Geographical relocation of a player which makes it impossible or difficult for such player to continue to participate in the league

The replacement player must NOT be a member of any other participating team (EXCEPT during the transfer window which is in the off-season)

### **10.2 Transfer of Players**

The window for transfer of players between 2 teams will open immediately after the completion of the last match day of a league season and will remain open until the deadline date fixed by MGI for submission of team list for the next season

During the transfer window, a team owner may FORMALLY approach other teams and make transfer requests for a player. A mail is required to be sent by the owner or manager of an interested team to the owner and/or manager of the current team of the player(s) of interest. Such mail should have MGI in copy.

The owner/manager of the team of the player of interest has the obligation to inform the player about the interest from another team. A discussion with the player about the interest is expected and the current team of the player is expected to decide to give or withhold consent.

A team shall only proceed to open talks with and possibly recruit such a player of interest, provided the consent of the player's current team is obtained. Otherwise, the interested team should ethically end its interest in such player.

However, in cases where the current team of a player of interest withholds consent, ONLY a formal mail from the player expressing interest in the transfer

can prompt the interested team into further discussions with the player and his/her current team. For possible compensation (if any is justified).

The intervention of MGI may also be sought where no amicable solutions could be reached among all parties.

Final approval of the SUCCESSFUL transfer request by MGI is the singular proof that the transfer of a player from one team to another has occurred.

## **11. Dress Code & Appearance**

All players and officials are disallowed to appear dirty and scruffy in appearance at the playing venues on any of the league weekends.

The following are the respective dress codes for officials and players respectively:

### **11.1 Players:**

The recommended dress code for players compliance is below in order of organizers, preference:

#### **11.1.1**

By accepting to participate in and be registered for the MGI league, players are brand ambassadors for MGI during the tourney. Thus, all players shall comply with any special request from MGI to wear branded MGI apparels at any specific time or event during the tourney.

MGI will provide players these branded MGI apparels which may include T-shirts, caps, bands, etc.

#### **11.1.2**

Where there is no special request for MGI apparels to be worn by players (especially T-shirts), players are free to wear any smart dresses of their choice.

#### **11.1.3**

We recommend a pair of decent foot wears to go with the dresses. No rubber slippers, please.

#### **11.1.4**

Because of the MGI brand image, it is expected of players to maintain personal hygiene and cleanliness i.e., tidy facial hairs, well-combed hair or clean-shaven, trim fingernails, etc.

#### **11.1.5**

In addition to the normal responsibility of the tourney TD, as prescribed in the WESPA rule book, the TD shall also have the responsibility to adjudge whether a player has fully complied with the MGI dress code or not and has the powers to prevent any player who contravenes the dress code on any of the league weekends from playing that day, where the player is unable to make an adjustment upon detection.

Where a player can make amendments, the player shall be allowed to begin games, but a warning will apply.

### **11.2 Tourney Officials:**

Tourney directors and all other officials at all MGI tourneys will be dressed smartly always, preferably as corporately as possible always.

## **12. MGI Anti-cheating Policy/Etiquettes/Disciplinary Committee**

The expectation of MGI is that players shall uphold the highest standards possible on ethics and etiquettes, in accordance with WESPA rule part 6 on conduct.

### **12.1 Etiquettes**

The following player behaviors are deemed as poor etiquettes bordering on disrespect to the opponent and intention to constitute nuisance value to the opponent:

Aggressive tile slamming on the board or rack

Aggressive timer slamming

Excessive noise bagging

Loud chewing of gum while playing a game

Chewing or eating food while playing a game

Cursing, mumbling or audibly complaining about bad pick during games.

**1<sup>st</sup> Violation during any single game will attract warning; 2<sup>nd</sup> violation will attract a 50 points penalty; 3<sup>rd</sup> violation will attract game forfeiture to opponent**

Players are also required to maintain extremely low noise level during games interlude especially inside the playing hall/arena. Consistent violation of this by a player will attract sanctions from the TD, which could include game/points forfeiture.

MGI seriously frowns at and has zero tolerance level for verbal/physical assault on any player or official or spectator. Nether are threats to assault condoned at any instance. Consequently, we advise all players to maintain their calm always

and not be provoked into committing such misdemeanor, as MGI will not hesitate to immediately expel such individuals from the league and all other MGI tournaments.

MGI will also not hesitate to invite law enforcement agencies to intervene if the gravity of the assault or threat to assault is assessed as “high risk”

## **12.2 Cheating**

In furtherance of ‘part 6’ of the WESPA rules, the following behaviors are classified as “cheating” to gain undue advantage over opponent, under the MGI-specific rules:

### **12.2.1 Collusion by Players and/or Teams**

MSPL Teams:

As a proactive measure for the MSPL, organizers reserve the right to rearrange match schedule at any point within the season, especially where there is a strong possibility of team collusion.

Whereby a team with little stake in a fixture with another team with much bigger stakes, the organizers can bring forward or push back the fixture as the organizers may seem fit, without compromising the overall balance and fairness of the general fixtures.

If there is suspicion that the outcome(s) of a particular fixture between 2 teams was fixed by both teams, the TD shall immediately start a review and probe of all games involved. If both teams found to be guilty of collusion, the teams shall be thrown out of the league and their continued participation brought to a halt.

Further sanctions on the affected teams by MGI shall also apply.

Players:

If there is suspicion that the outcome of a particular game was preplanned by both players and/or teams, the TD shall supervise a recount and vetting of that game. If both players are found guilty of colluding to effect a deliberate loss/rigged win/preplanned draw, both players shall be expelled immediately from the tourney and a 2-year ban from all MGI tourneys shall apply to the involved player(s).

In addition, the team to which the erring player belongs shall not have the opportunity to replace the player for the rest of the league. The team shall also continue participation for the rest of the match day with the one-man disadvantage.

Illegal Help to A Teammate:

If there is sufficient evidence that a player has given or attempted to give help (in any form) to his/her teammate to help that player gain an undue advantage over his opponent during a game, the player giving such illegal help shall immediately be expelled from the tournament by the TD.

A further 6 months ban from all MGI tourneys will also apply. And the team to which the erring player belongs will automatically forfeit the game to the other team.

His/her team shall also not be able to replace the player for the rest of the league. The team and will continue its participation for the rest of the match day with one-man disadvantage.

Where the illegal help was unsolicited by the teammate but didn't benefit from the help (by not playing the suggested move or words), such a player cannot be punished, and the game will not be forfeited to his/her opponent.

But where the help was unsolicited by the teammate but has benefitted from the play (by playing the suggested words or moves), the player may not be punished but he/she will forfeit the game to his opponent.

Where the illegal help was solicited by the teammate, whether he or she has benefitted from such help, such a player (as in the case of player giving such illegal help) shall immediately be expelled from the tournament by the TD.

His/her team shall also not be able to replace the player for the rest of the season and will have to complete the match day with the 1-man disadvantage.

#### Illegal Use of Memory Aids During A Game

The penalty for the illegal use of memory aids to gain undue advantage during a game is forfeiture of the game to opponent and expulsion from the tourney.

MGI shall also ban such a player from all its activities and report such a player to NSF for further sanctions.

Consequently, as a proactive measure, players are barred from placing any other items on the playing table during a game, including phones and other electronic devices, as well any type of books

### **13. MSPL Contractual Agreement**

We encourage contractual agreements between players and team owners to be officially documented and signed off by all concerned parties. The documented agreement shall specify the terms and conditions under which a player will fulfill his/her responsibility to his/her team as a player and vice versa.

The documented agreement shall be the basis for the intervention from MGI in cases of players-team owners disputes.

Consequently, players, managers and team owners requiring MGI intervention in disputes where an amicable resolution is unreachable by all concerned parties, concerning any violation(s) of the terms and conditions of the documented agreement(s), shall send and address such petitions to MGI with copies of the document's agreement.

MGI shall do the needful by adjudicating in the dispute, using best practices in the resolution of such disputes.

### **13.1 Complaint /redress process**

Team owners shall make a documented offer to player

A player shall sign off on the documented offer if he/she accepts the offer

Team owner/manager and all other interested parties shall sign off on the documented offer too.

The terms and conditions of agreement therein the agreement then becomes binding on all concerned parties.

If manager or player or team owner violated any term expires or condition; aggrieved party shall notify the other party and seek amicable remedial actions.

Where parties are unable to agree on the appropriate remedy and/or the aggrieved party is dissatisfied with the outcome, the aggrieved party shall petition MGI in writing. Copies of the documented agreement signed off by all concerned parties shall be provided MGI for MGI's intervention.

### **14. MSPL Officiating**

MGI shall always appoint tourney directors and officials who are seasoned, experienced and competent individuals who have a track record of excellence at running scrabble tourneys.

### **15. Use of Mobile Phones/Devices**

All mobile devices must be SWITCHED OFF during MSPL matches

Any player who needs to use the convenience during games must submit their mobile devices to TD before leaving the playing hall

Use of mobile by device as clock/timer may not be allowed during MSPL matches

The use of mobile phones by players during play or inside the playing venue while other games are going on is not allowed. The TD shall seriously frown at flouting this simple courtesy which includes:

#### **15.1**

Receiving or making calls while playing a game or right inside the playing hall.

#### **15.2**

Phones ringing in the middle of a game or while still inside the playing hall

15.3

In the instance where the timer on a mobile phone device is being used by players during a game, the owner of the phone must ensure that the timer is on 'Airplane Mode'. This is COMPULSORY.

***Violation of 4.1.7 will attract OUTRIGHT GAME FORFEITURE if this violation occurs while a player is playing a game.***

***Violation of 4.17 will attract a reduction in the erring player's teams' cumulative spread by 150, if the violation occurs right inside the playing venue but not during actual play.***

## **16. Submission of Team Lineup for Specific Match Day**

16.1

Team line-up must be submitted by the stipulated deadline. It is expected that team manager will confirm availability with the players before submitting their names.

16.2

Any change of name request after the submission deadline will attract a fee of N10,000/player. Please note that such request may NOT be honoured if the request is made less than 24 hours to commencement of games, EXCEPT there is an emergency.

16.3

If a player whose name was submitted by their team fails to show up on a match day, the fixtures will proceed as scheduled and the player will get walked over for the entire match day.

Additionally, the team will pay a fine of N20,000

The only EXCEPTION would be where there was an emergency or a genuine reason for the absence.

## **17. Live Annotations/Streaming for MSPL Matches**

MGI will always endeavor to deploy the aid of technology in the live annotations and streaming of selected MGI tourney games.

### **16. Spectators and Observers**

Spectating is disallowed for the league. No spectators are allowed inside the playing hall during games. Security at the playing venues will be instructed to this end.

When players have completed a round of game, both players are required to exit the hall immediately. Failure to do so is a violation of the rules and conducts for

players. And the team to which such erring player(s) belong(s) to is liable to suffer points deduction.

### **18. MGI CLUB Membership**

All players wishing to play for any of the MSPL teams in the league are required to take up membership of the MGI club, without which a player is barred from featuring in the MSPL.

Members are required to pay an annual membership subscription fee for MGI membership.

This yearly subscription is expected to be paid up in the off-season of the league and before the commencement of the next season. This is a prerequisite for teams to register any player for the next season.

Membership of the MGI CLUB will give members access to various MGI resources, opportunities and privileges.