

Magic: The Gathering®

Regular REL Guide to Fixing Common Errors

The vast majority of **Magic** players play for fun and enjoyment, and see a tournament as a social event. To encourage this environment, we (as judges) want to curtail certain behaviours while fostering others. For example, letting players chat during a booster draft is fine – up to the point of giving strategy advice, which is where we draw the line. This document draws those lines, and helps you help your players have a fun event.

Your players, in turn, are expected to do their best to play correctly. However, **Magic** is a complicated game, and it is pretty easy to make a mistake – here we're talking about playing a spell without the correct resources or neglecting to take a mandatory action - we can't protect players from playing badly!

While it is important that players are trying to play correctly, it's also important they know that when something goes wrong, calling a judge (you!) is the best course of action – you will do your best to fix the situation. Ask some questions and if you're confident that the error was accidental, it will usually be for one of the common errors included in the document. When delivering a ruling, be sure – or go and check the answer. Players will appreciate you making this effort, and you will give better rulings. If the situation is not covered by this document simply make the best ruling you can, and try and find out the answer afterwards. Remember that the Head Judge has the last word and after the Head Judge has given a ruling, the players are expected to play on.

Beyond fixing the error it is also important to remind the players to play more carefully – in effect this reminder is an Official Penalty, but avoid being heavy handed as you want to keep your events fun and relaxed. However, there will be times when simply reminding players to be more careful will not be enough. If a player repeatedly makes the same mistake despite your increasingly stern reminders, warn them that the next occurrence will likely earn them a Game Loss. Hopefully this final step will not be required, but knowing it is possible should get the player to correct their behaviour.

Furthermore, some extreme behaviour (covered below) will result in the most serious penalty – being ejected from the event. If you do have to hand out a Disqualification let the players know that while your decision is final, the DCI would still like to hear their side of the story. Allow them to complete a statement, including their DCI number and contact details, which they can forward to the DCI – and you do the same. This provides you with the opportunity to have your decision double-checked, and gives the player the chance to have their grievances heard.

All of the fixes below assume that your tournament is in a store or other public space. However, if your event requires deck lists, provides large prizes or is otherwise of a more competitive nature, please consult the full *Infraction Procedure Guide*, as some rulings require more complex solutions.

- Common Errors -

A player realises they have forgotten to take a mandatory action

If the action was optional, assume they chose not to - and no further fix is required. Otherwise, resolve the action normally. These sorts of actions are often discovered when they trigger a second time - if so, it is ok to stack one (only!) extra “forgotten” action.

A player accidentally flipped over a card while shuffling or saw a card they shouldn't have

Find out if any of the deck is “known” (perhaps a previous spell put cards on the bottom?) then put the revealed card(s) back into, and shuffle, the “unknown” portion. They can then continue playing normally.

Instead of drawing the correct amount of cards, a player has accidentally drawn more

Work out how many extra cards they have drawn, then take that many cards at random from their hand and replace them on top of the library – or if this was their opening hand, shuffle them back in (they can make mulligan decisions based on this new hand).

A player makes an in-game error not mentioned above

This will be the bulk of player errors – and we will usually leave the game as is. However, if the error was caught straight away, and you are confident no major decisions have been made then you can back up the game to the point of error. If you do choose to back up, it's important to reverse all the actions – no partial fixes!

A player has illegal, insufficient, another player's cards or sideboard (Game 1 only) cards in their deck

Remove any cards that shouldn't be there and replace any cards that should - or Basic Lands of their choice if the deck is short. Recommend that the players count their deck before they start a match – this can help avoid these simple errors.

- General Unwanted Behaviours -

There will sometimes be issues that do not have official fixes, but need to be discouraged. These include, but are not limited to;

- Players showing up late to their match
- Players taking unreasonable amounts of time side-boarding or making play decisions
- Inadequate shuffling after a search
- Asking for, or providing, strategy advice during a tournament match or booster draft

In all of these cases, educate the player on better behaviour – for example, alternate shuffling techniques or the importance of allowing players to make their own decisions. Once a player has been asked to correct their behaviour, treat any repeated instance of the same problem as you would any repeat infraction.

- Serious Problems -

There are also certain behaviours that will not be tolerated in any sanctioned event. You have the authority to disqualify a player from your event if they engage in any of the following;

- Aggressive, violent or abusive behaviour
- Cheating, lying or intentionally making illegal game actions or avoiding penalties
- Influencing Match outcomes, either by incentives, coercion or random methods

If a player engages in conduct that you feel is likely to upset, offend or affect the safety of others, but falls short of violence or abuse, you may decide to simply give the player a stern chat about what is expected in your event – and let them know that failure to curb this behaviour will result in their ejection.

- Resources -

Need an answer now? Try logging in to <http://dcifamily.org/askthejudge/> – and ask!

Want to find a local judge? Log in to the Judge Center at <https://membership.wizards.com/login.aspx> and click on the People tab – use the filters at the bottom to narrow your search, then send them a message!

Event Sanctioning How-To - <http://tinyurl.com/TO-Sanction>

Wizards Play Network FAQ – go to the <http://wizards.custhelp.com/> site and search for WPN FAQ

TO Community Forums - <http://tinyurl.com/TO-HQ>

Magic Document Center – Home to the Tournament Rules and the Infraction Procedure Guide

<http://tinyurl.com/DCI-Docs>

Magic Rules – also links to Gatherer and Set FAQ's (in various languages) <http://tinyurl.com/DCI-Rules>

Magic Community Rules Page – lots of the above, translated for your enjoyment - <http://www.dcirules.org/>

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