



SWCCG Player's Committee Online Tournament Guide

Version 1.3 (September 2008)

1.0 - Guiding Principle

Players of SWCCG should always strive to act in good faith and play with the utmost integrity. Online play is no exception to this rule. The directions and guidelines in this document are designed to uphold the integrity of online play and ensure its success as a competitive medium.

2.0 – Medium

Online play occurs exclusively using the Holotable program (www.holotable.com).

3.0 – Cheating

Cheating is not tolerated and will result in disqualification. Players should note that almost every action they take is recorded in a game log that is visible to their opponent and also recorded on a central server where it can be independently verified. To enhance this logging process it is strongly recommended that players have the optional advanced logging feature enabled (in table/options). To avoid allegations of cheating, players should always use a keyboard or mouse command to perform an action (6.0).

Loading an additional deck during a game is not something which can be done accidentally, nor can players demonstrate that they have not done that to obtain an advantage. Consequentially, if a player loads up an additional deck once a game has commenced, it will be treated as cheating.

4.0 – Timing

Online games will go for a maximum of **one hundred and twenty minutes** (2:00) in Swiss tournaments and **one hundred minutes** (1:40) in a match play tournament. Time will begin once both players have loaded their decks into the program and have indicated they are ready to start. Games will be timed according to the server clock. Games may only be paused if they are interrupted for a valid reason (4.1).

4.1 Pausing

These are the circumstances under which a game may be validly paused:

- technical issues (**7.0**),
- dropping (**4.3**),
- rules questions (**5.0** and **5.1**), and
- verification screenshot (**6.3**).

For pauses that happen while both players are in-game (the latter two), players should use the pause function (button down the bottom of the screen) to ensure integrity.

4.2 Stalling

Players should always play as quickly and efficiently as the game circumstances permit. Players in online tournaments should provide their undivided attention to the game and are not permitted to have programs unrelated to the game open (this will also help to avoid technical problems). Leaving the playing area during the game is strongly discouraged and players should ensure that they have an uninterrupted time period before beginning the game.

Stalling is a serious matter and demonstrable stalling will result in disqualification. Please note again that all player actions are logged and that serious, continued stalling will be apparent from the log. If a player has not made an action or communicated for **20 seconds** their opponent is permitted to ask them to verify that they are present. If they do not respond within **10 seconds** this will be taken as evidence that they are not present at the playing area and may be taken as evidence of stalling.

To avoid many of these issues, it is recommended that players use a real time voice chat program while playing. See **etiquette**.

4.3 Dropping

If a player has not made an action or communication for **60 seconds**, their opponent must ask if they are present. If they do not respond within **20 seconds**, the player will be deemed **inactive** and the game is paused. If a player is inactive, their opponent should take the following actions:

- save the game (file/save),
- take a screenshot of the table (press 'print screen' on the keyboard, open ms paint or a graphics program and press control v to paste). Ensure that the period of inactivity and the 60 second challenge of the inactive player is visible in the chat log,
- end the game and enter the lobby (table/end game),
- notify the judge if possible (**5.0**)

If their opponent does not re-appear within **five minutes** after these steps occur they will be deemed to have **dropped**, except in extraordinary circumstances (**7.0**). It will count as a full win for the non-dropped player and a full loss for the dropped player (see. If a

player drops from a game in a match play tournament then they will be taken to have lost each of the games in the round.

4.4 Finishing timed games

It is each player's responsibility to keep track of the time of the game and their duty to post notification once they observe that there is **ten minutes** left in the game (so after 1:50 in a swiss tournament or 1:30 in a match play tournament). The time limit for each game will elapse ten minutes after a player has posted such notification. Once time has elapsed, the game will continue until the end of the turn of the player who went second in the game (this will usually be light side, but obviously certain cards make the dark player go second).

5.0 – Judging

When an online game occurs, players can try to organise for a judge to be available. The judge should be present in either the program lobby or (by agreement with the players) via a messaging program such as MSN. The role of the judge is to:

- answer any rules questions that arise, including questions about this guide,
- declare inactive players dropped (according to the procedures in **4.2**), and
- make certain verifications (**6.2**).

If players require a ruling, the game may be paused while the judge provides an answer. The judge's decision is final.

5.1 Games without judges

If it is not possible for players to play at a time when a judge is available then rules questions follow a 'your card, your responsibility' system. It is important that players use this system in good faith.

If a player makes a good faith challenge to the rules interpretation of a card or something which has been done with a card, then the game will pause. The player whose card it is or who is attempting to do the challenged action must justify their action by citing the relevant rule from the rule book (it is recommended that players have an electronic copy of the rule book available) or linking a post on the rules section of the PC forum.

If the dispute arises due to the wording of a card and there is no specific rules entry, then players should try to find analogous wording and apply general rules of construction. If the owner of the card or the player making the challenged action is not able to justify their action, they must accept the challenge even if they 'know' it is wrong. Remember, judges sometimes make wrong calls too.

Any attempt to abuse this system should be reported to the tournament director who will then analyse the game log. Players who are found to have acted in bad faith will face sanction, which may include disqualification.

6.0 – Program guidelines

All commands relating to force piles should be done using the program commands. This can be done either with the keyboard shortcuts (full list in help/key commands) or the mouse-click command window (table/command window). There are commands for almost every game action, including (key commands in brackets, mouse commands in command window):

- Activate (a), use (u), lose from reserve deck (lower case L, ie l) retrieve (x), recirculate force (shift E).
- Draw from reserve deck (w) or force pile (d).
- Draw destiny (b) and move destiny face down to used pile (shift B).
- Search reserve deck (1), starting pile (2 – this is where start effect/shields should go), force pile (3), used pile (4) and lost pile (5). Searches of all piles except starting and lost will result in an automatic shuffle. Players can check a “hide search” box if they are permitted to do so (ie with ‘any card’ searches).
- Shuffle (shift S with mouse over the relevant pile).
- Declare use (q) or targeting (m) of a card or force drain at a location (-), just put mouse pointer over the relevant card and press key. This should be done before using any card to search and when using/targeting with a weapon or card.
- Send card to bottom of used pile (.), eg. with janus. This can be done from hand.

All of these commands result in a log appearing in the control window. Manual movement from any pile to another pile (eg. used pile -> lost pile, lost pile -> out of play pile) will also result in a log of that action.

6.1 Loading decks

Players must load decks sequentially to prevent critical program errors arising. The player to load their deck second must wait until their opponent’s deck is fully loaded (a loading bar will appear at the bottom of the screen) before beginning to load theirs. By default, the light side player should load first.

This unfortunately has the potential to give the second player who loads information about the first player’s deck, specifically their objective (as it will be face up in the pile as it loads) and the number of cards in their deck (which could indicate the starting effect used). To prevent this occurring, it is recommended that player take the following steps:

- Only flag your start effect/shields as starting in Holodeck and set your reserve deck to load in your hand (in table/options).
- If you have less than the maximum possible number of cards in your deck (currently 72), you are permitted to include as many copies of your starting effect as are necessary to make up the difference. Upon revealing starting effects, these extra copies must be shown to your opponent and immediately placed **face down and out of play**.

- Once decks have been loaded, it is recommended that players ask their opponent whether they have loaded the correct deck before revealing any of their cards.
- Tournament directors have the option of requiring that players notify them of their starting location or objective before each round begins.

6.2 Accidental input

Players must take the utmost care to not accidentally input commands, especially those commands which result in a hidden card being revealed (eg destiny draw or draw to hand). If they are unfamiliar with the program and feel that they might accidentally hit a key command (eg. instead of typing in the chat box), then they should check the 'disable key commands' option in the command window. The following rules might seem punitive but are designed to ensure utmost integrity of the game.

If any command is accidentally inputted then the player should immediately press **ctrl z** to undo the action. This will create a log of the undo. If the accidental action results in the player seeing a card which they should not have then the following actions occur:

- that accidentally revealed card is revealed to the player's opponent and then placed back where it belongs, then
- if the card was revealed from reserve deck and the reserve deck has five or more cards in it, then the opponent may choose to shuffle that pile,
- if the card was revealed from reserve deck and the reserve deck has less than five cards in it, the opponent may choose to move the card to the used pile (shuffle) or leave it in the reserve deck and shuffle, or
- if the card was revealed from force pile then the opponent may choose to either:
 - return the card,
 - return the card and shuffle the force pile, or
 - place the revealed card in used pile or reserve deck (and shuffle that pile) and then activate a force to replace it.

Please note that if a weapon or other targeted destiny is drawn before the player announces a valid target, it will be treated as an accidental reveal.

6.3 Verification

Verification of a missed pile search can be done with a minimum of hassle if the following procedure is followed. The searching player should ask whether the opponent requires verification and, if so, their opponent should:

- control-drag the pile to a free space on their left side of the table (and rotate if necessary using control r),
- flip all cards in the pile (with mouse over the pile, control right click or control f if right click commands are being used),
- press h (with mouse over the pile) to horizontally fan the pile,

- inspect for a maximum of **30 seconds** for piles of > 10 cards, and **5 seconds** for piles of 10 cards or less,
- press ctrl z (undo) until the pile returns to its original position.

In rare circumstances a player might be able to request that a judge verify their opponent's hand. For example, if the player searches using power of the hutt and the only applicable card in the reserve deck is Jabba's Space Cruiser (v) and they declare that they cannot deploy it due to a lack of alien pilots in their hand. If a player demands verification in these circumstances, the game is paused. The player making the search must then take a screenshot of the table (hit print screen key, paste in a graphics program and save the file). This screenshot should not be cropped in any way. If there is a judge available, the judge can now verify this screenshot (they should make sure that the number of cards visible is equal to the displayed number of cards in the player's hand). If there is no judge available the screenshot should immediately be emailed to the tournament organiser along with a brief explanation. If the searching player is found to have been dishonest in these circumstances they may be held to have cheated (**3.0**).

6.4 Agents of the Black Sun-type searches

The Agents of the Black Sun objective contains two searches which involve peeking at a number of cards in a pile (reserve deck and force pile) and putting them back in the same order. There are other cards which do similar things, like inconsequential barriers. To avoid any possibility or allegation of cheating, these searches **must** be done in the following way:

- declare the search,
- draw the specified number of cards from the relevant pile into hand (using d or w or command window),
- peek for as long as required (no stalling!),
- press **ctrl z** until the cards return to their previous position.

For any card which does a search of your own pile like this but lets you put them back in any order, the player must place their hand face down on the table, draw the specified number of cards and then replace them manually. Players should follow this procedure for searches of their reserve deck using the 7 side of the Imperial Entanglements objective, but obviously must shuffle after replacing the cards. Similar searches of your opponent's card piles (such as a dangerous time) do not require you to do this.

6.5 Watch Your Step (v)

Drawing the bottom card of your reserve deck with 7 side of Watch Your Step (v) is unfortunately one of the most difficult actions to perform in Holotable. The following procedure should be observed:

- Clear a wide horizontal space that is the full length of the playing table.
- Drag your reserve deck to the left side of that wide space and press 'h' to fan

- the reserve deck horizontally.
- Manually drag the leftmost card to your hand (that is the bottom card).
- Press 'c' over the pile to collapse it and drag it back to your reserve deck

6.6 Saving

At the start of the game, players are asked to enter a password. This protects save game files from unauthorised access. **It is of vital importance that you input this password correctly and remember it.** In the event of a program error (7.0), this password is required to recover the game and there are no alternative ways to recover it.

7.0 – Technical issues

Holotable is, in general, a very stable program. Occasionally errors can arise, mainly due to network hiccups. To minimise the potential for performance issues relating to network congestion or a lack of memory, **players are required to close down all non game-related programs before starting**, including any download or p2p programs. Players should also ensure that they are not performing a virus or disk scan or other system intensive background process while playing.

If either player sees a SYNC ERROR warning (“****Serious error (movetocommon): cards out of sync. Clear the table and reload decks.****” will appear in the chat log) they must **immediately** notify the other player and the game is paused. The player who did not get the error must make a save game, clear the table (table/clear all cards) and then load the save game. The game can then continue.

If one player's crashes for other reasons, then their opponent will usually be immediately dropped from the game. This prompts an automatic request to make a save file. **Players must save the game in this situation.** The player who crashes must return to the lobby as soon as possible. They are considered inactive at this time and the relevant procedures should be followed (4.3). One of the reasons for the 'deemed inactive' rules in 4.3 is that it is possible their opponent will not be immediately dropped on a crash. The method of questioning after 1 minute inactivity and subsequently going to the lobby will ensure that the game continues with minimal disruption.

If either player sees a strangely worded error message, they should ask their opponent if they just attempted to use the “place card on bottom of used pile” command (“.” By default). This sometimes causes an inconsistently worded error message to arise. If this is what has happened, then save and continue on with the game as normal – the program should be unaffected.

To prevent misunderstandings related to program crashes (among other things), players are encouraged to be in contact with an external voice or messaging program (eg. msn) while the game is in progress (11.0).

7.1 Extraordinary circumstances

Due to the nature of the medium, it is possible that an extraordinary circumstance like an electrical blackout, complete system failure or telecommunications network shutdown could prevent you from finishing a game. Even if a circumstance like this does cause you to drop, you do not have an automatic right to continue the game. You will only be permitted to continue the game if:

- a judge or the tournament director is satisfied that you dropped because of an extraordinary circumstance,
- your opponent agrees to continue the game (it is their right to refuse this), and
- the game can still be completed before the next round of the tournament.

8.0 – Scheduling games

Players during an online tournament are expected to make sure they will be reasonably available during the period of the tournament and must make good faith efforts to schedule games with their matched opponent.

In the event of a serious and irreconcilable scheduling dispute, the tournament director has absolute discretion to declare that one player has forfeited (resulting in a full loss for that player and a full win for the other player). The tournament director should take into account the relative efforts of each player to be available during the round, especially availability over the weekend, as it is expected that most people will be more available on weekends.

A tournament week begins at midnight on Thursday (US Eastern time) of a calendar week or such other time as is nominated at the start of the tournament by the tournament director.

9.0 – Scoring

By default, online tournaments, both match and Swiss play, follow the scoring system laid out in the PC's tournament guide, including the tie-breakers outlined there.

9.1 Forced differentials

In the event that the tournament director is required to assign a win or a loss to players due to circumstances such as dropping, disqualification or failure to schedule a game, the differential awarded to each player is at the tournament director's discretion. By default, a player receiving a forced win will be awarded FW(+20) and a player receiving a forced loss will be awarded FL(-40). However, the tournament director may depart from that if they feel it is appropriate.

9.2 Strength of Schedule

Prior to the commencement of a tournament, the tournament director may nominate that the tournament is to utilise a "strength of schedule" tiebreaking system.

Under this system, differential is not recorded and has no bearing on the tournament outcome. Between games, players with the same number of victory points are randomly ordered among each other and pairings occur as normal after that. At the end of the tournament, players with equal victory points are separated according to the strength of the opponents they faced.

This Strength of Schedule is determined by first assigning each player a “Strength” score based on the following formula:

- a) [Total VP score] if all games played; or
- b) [Total VP score + 1 VP for each game missed] if dropped or disqualified
- c) With a minimum score of [# of games * .2/3] i.e. 5.33 for 8 games

A player’s Strength of Schedule score will then be the sum of their opponents’ Strength scores. Ties are then broken by comparing Strength of Schedule scores of tied players; higher scores win.

If there is still a tie after this, these ties will be broken as follows:

- Add up the SoS of each players’ opponent. Higher total wins.
- Drop the lowest strength opponent for player and repeat the original calculation; keep dropping the lowest strength opponent until the tie is broken.

If players have the exact same score after going through this, flip a coin.

This system introduces an additional change. Because of the removal of the removal of differential from consideration, players are allowed to concede or drop a match at any point. This will also not remove the player from the event. However, there is still no “Draw” option as that is not a possible consequence from a game of SWCCG.

10.0 – New cards and erratas

If new cards are released or erratas are issues while a tournament is in progress, the new cards and text will not be legal in that tournament. The card pool will remain the same throughout the entire tournament.

Note that any new rulings or clarifications issued by the PC’s rules committee while a tournament is in progress *will* take effect immediately.

11.0 – Etiquette

The most important thing to remember in online play is that your opponent cannot see what you are doing and so you must communicate, explicitly, every action you take. This goes for pile searches, retrieval, use of force, initiation of battles (target the location you’re starting at) and force drains, targeting (especially with weapons) and use of game text. All of this is made easier with the use of shortcut keys but is probably even easier with voice chat. **It is recommended that players use voice chat where possible**, using programs such as msn (later versions have inbuilt voice chat) or Skype.

Do not do this if you do not have a reasonably quick internet speed (512kbs or greater), as it might cause network congestion and technical issues within Holotable.

11.1 Swearing

Swearing at your opponent, particularly in an aggressive or hostile manner, is unacceptable and may result in sanctions against the player.

11.2 Phase changes

Phases can be a source of confusion, even in the offline game. There is an optional phase movement feature in Holotable which can reduce this confusion (at the bottom of the screen). This feature is simply a reporting tool, it does not limit the actions you can take in any way. At the beginning of the game, if either player demands to use this then each player must use it. At any point during the game, players can agree to either start or stop using this feature.

11.3 Everything is logged

Just a final reminder to players – everything is logged. If someone tries to pull something shady on you, like the infamous ‘take an action in the opponent’s activate phase, ask “action?” after that and if they then say no, say “pass” to force a phase change and stop them activating’ **then it will be logged**. This logging is the ultimate regulator on unsportsmanlike behaviour. If a player feels that they are the victims of unsportsmanlike conduct they should feel free to take a screenshot and save it for future reference. So play nice!!