

700. Official Tournament Rules

This section encompasses special rules for playing *Firestorm* in a competitive, tournament environment. They are not intended for casual play. If you are new to the game, please skip this section until you are familiar with the basic gameplay of *Firestorm*.

General Rules:

701. Invocation

In order for these tournament rules to be in effect at a tournament, they must be invoked. To invoke the tournament rules, the event's organizer must announce that they are in effect prior to the beginning of play for the tournament event.

Note: All tournaments hosted by Third World Games, Inc. or its staff will invoke these rules automatically without announcement. These include storyline events, championships, as well as events physically run by TWG, Inc. employees or contractors.

702. Player Agreement and Eligibility

By entering the tournament, each player agrees to abide by these Official Tournament Rules, the *Firestorm* game rules, and the decisions of the tournament organizer and judges.

Any individual is eligible to compete in a tournament using the Official Tournament Rules with the following exceptions:

- The head judge or any other judge of the tournament (unless the Player Judge Rule is used. See 709 below)
- The organizer of the tournament.
- Employees of Third World Games, Inc. and certain other individuals designated by TWG, Inc. may not compete in Storyline or championship events.

703. Rules and Supersession

Official tournaments shall use the most recent version of the *Firestorm* game rules, including all errata and modifications issued by Third World Games, Inc. Players and tournament officials are responsible for knowing the rules of play.

In the event that the *Firestorm* rules contradict the Official Tournament Rules, the Official Tournament Rules shall take precedence.

703.1 Card Interpretation

All cards shall be adjudicated using the wording of that card, plus all applicable official errata. Older card versions with functional differences (particularly cards from the *Firestorm Promotional Edition*) must be played using the most current wording.

703.2 Proxy Cards

All cards must be genuine *Firestorm* cards. Players cannot use proxy or replacement cards in any tournament.

At the head judge's discretion, a player may use a proxy card to replace a card that has become damaged or worn through tournament play use.

Players worried about damaging their cards should use protective sleeves during play.

704. Supported Formats

Third World Games, Inc. currently supports two formats of play for *Firestorm* tournaments:

- **Constructed**—Players build a deck from their cards before the tournament begins, and compete in the event using this deck.
- **Sealed Deck**—Players are given some amount of sealed product by the tournament organizer, and then construct a deck using only these cards that will be used in the tournament.

Organizers should announce well in advance which format a particular tournament will employ.

704.1 Constructed

Constructed decks shall conform to the constraints outlined in Rule 101.1 of the *Firestorm* rulebook with one exception—Constructed decks must contain a minimum of 60 cards instead of the usual 50.

Decks must be fully assembled prior to the start of play, and a deck's contents cannot be altered once play has begun.

At the organizer's discretion, he or she may require each player to submit a written list of the contents of his or her deck. All decklists so submitted shall become the sole property of the tournament organizer, and he or she may publish such lists in print or electronically following the completion of the event.

Note: It is the policy of Third World Games, Inc. to publish decklists for major tournaments on the Third World Games, Inc. website.

704.11 Errata and Banned Cards

From time to time, Third World Games, Inc. may find it necessary to ban or restrict the usage of certain cards in constructed tournament play. This will be done by either issuing errata to a card (which will change its functions and powers) or by banning the card from constructed tournament play.

Errata issued to cards by Third World Games, Inc. through its normal rules channels are considered binding on all tournaments that employ the Official Tournament Rules.

Announced October 1, 2001

Methane Giant has resource statistic 1 instead of 0 in Sealed Deck play.

Note that that above isn't errata to the card. It's merely a special rule for Sealed Deck tournament play. Methane Giant still has resource 0 in Constructed tournament play and in non-tournament play.

No copies of any banned cards may be included in a player's constructed deck for tournament play.

There are no banned cards as of July 1, 2001.

704.12 New Sets

Newly released *Firestorm* sets may not be included in constructed tournament decks for ten (10) calendar days following the set's officially published released date. Release dates are officially published by Third World Games, Inc., and may not always accurately reflect ten days of retail availability of a particular set.

Third World Games, Inc. reserves the right to allow sets in constructed tournaments that have not been available for ten days after the official published date. If a tournament will use a set before the ten days have elapsed, the tournament must be announced at least fifteen (15) days before the start of the tournament itself.

704.2 Sealed Deck

The exact mix of product provided to players for a sealed deck event is entirely the decision of the organizer, but the amount of product must be announced prior to the beginning of the deck construction period, and every player must receive an identical mix of product.

704.21 Sealed Deck Construction

Once all players receive their product at the tournament, a deck construction period shall be allowed for players to build decks out of their sealed product. The deck construction period must not be less than 25 minutes, but the exact length is at the

discretion of the tournament organizer; however, the length of the deck construction period must be announced as sealed product is distributed, and every player must be allowed the same amount of time.

Note: Third World Games, Inc. recommends a 30 minute deck construction period.

During the deck construction period, each player must build a deck conforming to Rule 101.1 of the *Firestorm* game rules using only the cards available from his or her issued sealed product. All cards not included in the player's deck form the player's extras. A player may only use the cards included in his or her issued sealed product, and cannot introduce outside cards from his or her collection. Players also may not trade or otherwise acquire cards from another player's issued sealed product or collection for inclusion in the player's tournament deck.

Note: All cards a player receives in his or her issued sealed product may be used in the tournament, even if that card is banned from constructed play.

At the organizer's discretion, he or she may require players to submit a written list of all cards received in issued sealed product, as well as a list of which of those cards comprise the player's deck for the tournament. If he or she does so, players cannot change the contents of their decks once play has begun. All decklists so submitted shall become the sole property of the tournament organizer, and he or she may publish such lists in print or electronically following the completion of the event.

Note: It is the policy of Third World Games, Inc. to publish decklists for major tournaments on the Third World Games, Inc. website.

If the organizer does not require such a decklist, players may change cards in their deck by swapping out cards from the deck and replacing them with cards from his or her extras at anytime except during the play of a game.

705. Tournament Rules Changes

Third World Games, Inc. reserves the right to alter these Official Tournament rules at anytime. Such alterations may include but are not limited to addition or deletion of rules, addition or deletion of cards from the constructed banned list, and changes to player eligibility.

All changes to the Official Tournament Rules will be announced on the first of the month to take effect on the first of the following month. *For example: Changes announced on September 1, 2001 will take effect on October 1, 2001.*

Tournament Definitions:

706. Tournament Personnel

Every tournament shall have a tournament organizer, head judge, and scorekeeper. These roles are usually held by different people, but a single individual may act in more than one capacity if necessary.

706.1 Tournament Organizer

The tournament organizer is the individual who decides to hold the tournament event, and is responsible for choosing a site for the event, for selecting its format, and for advertising the event. The organizer also appoints other tournament personnel and is responsible for providing all necessary material to run the tournament, including sealed product for sealed deck events.

While the organizer controls the site and is responsible for the event's operation, he or she cannot overrule the head judge on interpretations of the Official Tournament Rules or the *Firestorm* game rules during tournament play.

706.2 Head Judge

The head judge is responsible for enforcing the Official Tournament Rules and *Firestorm* game rules, and shall deal with disputes and problems between players during play.

The head judge is the final authority at all tournaments using the Official Tournament Rules (except for Storyline and championship events; see Section 800 below). Neither the tournament organizer nor other judges may overrule the head judge's decision.

706.3 Scorekeeper

The scorekeeper is responsible for accurately recording the results of player matches, and maintaining a record of player standings and rankings within the tournament. The scorekeeper shall also record individuals who drop or are otherwise eliminated from the event, and is responsible for producing pairings for each and every round of play.

The scorekeeper is also responsible, in certain instances, for reporting the results of the tournament to the tournament organizer for submission to Third World Games, Inc.

706.4 Other Judges and Head Judge Appeal

Either the tournament organizer or head judge may appoint other individuals to serve as judges during tournament play. Such individuals may perform any of the duties assigned to the head judge; however, any decision of a judge may be appealed by a player to the head judge for a final resolution.

A judge must render a ruling or decision on the issue at hand before players can appeal to the head judge. That is, players cannot bypass the regular judge and speak directly to the head judge unless the regular judge so desires.

706.5 Other Personnel

The tournament organizer may appoint other individuals to assist with the smooth operation of the tournament. Duties and responsibilities of such personnel are entirely the discretion of the tournament organizer.

707. Tournament Match Play

Tournaments shall employ the Swiss Style system (see Appendix A below), and may or may not include a cut for single elimination championship rounds at the discretion of the tournament organizer (*Note: All Storyline and championship events recognized by Third World Games, Inc. will include a top 4, 8 or 16 cut for single elimination*).

Every tournament match shall consist of a single two-player game of *Firestorm* using normal rules and victory conditions.

707.1 Match Time Limit

Every round of the tournament shall have a time limit of not less than 45 minutes. The time limit will be selected by the tournament organizer, and announced prior to the beginning of play.

Note: Third World Games, Inc. recommends a time limit of 70 minutes.

707.2 Match Results and Scoring

A match ends when one player wins the game, or at the end of the turn in progress when the time limit expires. A player shall receive **match points** for the match as follows:

- 3 points for **actual victory**. Actual victory is achieved by winning the game (Total, Transcendent, or Alternate) before the expiration of the time limit or during the final turn after the expiration of the time limit, or by an opponent conceding a match, or by a victory awarded by the head judge as the result of a penalty.
- 2 points for **partial victory**. If the game does not finish due to the time limit, either player may achieve partial victory by having more game points than his or her opponent after the end of the final turn (see below).
- 1 point for a **draw**. A draw is achieved when time expires and a player has 20 or less game points (see below), or if the players mutually make an Agreement to Draw (see 707.21 below)
- 0 points for a **loss**. Losing the game when the opponent achieves an actual victory is a match loss.

To calculate partial victories, and draws, award game points as follows:

- Each player divides 30 by the number of planets in locations B through F with which his or her opponent began the game. For each planet that player has conquered, he or she earns game points. So:
 - i. Planet only in location B = 30 points each.
 - ii. Planets in locations B & C = 15 points each.
 - iii. Planets in locations B-D = 10 points each
 - iv. Planets in locations B-E = 7.5 points each
 - v. Planets in locations B-F = 6 points each.

So if you began the game with three planets in your Star System (Homeworld plus 2 others) and your opponent conquered one, he or she would receive 15 game points. If you began the game with six planets in your Star System (all locations filled), and your opponent conquered two planets, he or she would receive 12 game points.

- Then, add 1 point for each Tech Level above 0 the player has achieved when time ends for a match. *For example: If you ended the game with a Tech Level of 17, you would receive 17 more game points for your Tech.*

Whichever player has more game points receives 2 match points. His or her opponent receives 1 match point. In the case of both players having the same number of game points, they each receive 1 match point.

707.21 Agreement to Draw

Two players paired in a match may, at anytime prior to the end of the time limit, make an Agreement to Draw and end the game immediately. Such Agreements shall immediately be reported to the scorekeeper. Each player is awarded 1 match point.

Each player may ask his opponent at anytime for an Agreement to Draw, but players may not persist or badger opponents for acceptance once the offer is declined.

Agreements to Draws do not violate the collusion rules (see 707.23 below) in and of themselves, however the prohibitions against outside incentives still apply to attempting to get an opponent to make an Agreement to Draw.

707.22 Conceding Games and Withdrawing from Tournament

A player may, at anytime, concede a game to his or her opponent, and so inform the scorekeeper. This results in the opponent receiving 3 points and the conceding player receiving 0 points. Such a concession may not be the result of illegal collusion (see 707.23 below).

A player may, at anytime, withdraw from the tournament event by informing the scorekeeper of his or her intention. If the player is currently involved in a game, or if a round has already been paired, such withdrawal results in the withdrawing player conceding to his or her opponent as above.

707.23 Collusion and Wagering

Players shall not make wagers on themselves, their opponents, other players, or the results of any match or matches in the tournament. Players so doing may be disqualified at the discretion of the head judge.

Spectators shall not make wagers on any players or matches in the tournament. Spectators so doing may be ejected from the event site.

Players shall not enter into agreements to alter the outcome of a particular match or matches, or of the tournament itself. Such agreements include, but are not limited to, attempts to bribe or coerce an opponent to concede, attempting to randomly determine a match outcome without actually playing the game (except for Agreements to Draw or unilateral concessions), or pre-arranged agreements to concede matches.

Players who collude will be disqualified from the tournament at the head judge's discretion.

Players engaging in such behavior at Storyline or championship events may be banned, at the sole discretion of Third World Games, Inc., from participating in future Storyline or championship events.

707.3 Tiebreakers and Standings

At the end of the Swiss rounds, prizes shall be awarded (or final cut determined) based on a player's final standing using the following criteria:

- The player's total match points for all rounds played or Intentionally Drawn.
- 1st tiebreaker: Opponents' resistance—Sum the match points of all of the player's opponents throughout the event.
- 2nd tiebreaker: Use a random method to determine an order of two or more players tied with the same match points and opponent's resistance.

707.31 <Intentionally removed>

707.4 Playing a Match

707.41 Shuffling

Each player shuffles his or her deck before the game begins. Shuffling may be performed in any way the player desires, provided all shuffling occurs with the cards face

down and the cards end up randomized when finished. After shuffling, the opponent presents the deck to his or her opponent, and the opponent **must** shuffle it in the same way as if he or she were shuffling his or her own deck.

Prior to the beginning of the game, each player has two minutes to shuffle his or her own deck followed by one minute to shuffle the opponent's deck. During the game, anytime a draw pile needs to be shuffled, the player has 30 seconds to perform the shuffle, and then the opponent has 30 seconds to shuffle the deck.

707.42 Tardiness

Players must be in their seat when the round of play begins. Any player not in his or her seat when the round begins has a default maximum hand size of 5 instead of 6 for the entirety of the match. If a player is more than 10 minutes late, the head judge, at his discretion, may award an actual victory to the opponent.

707.43 Outside Assistance and Coaching

Players must play their own game and cannot receive advice or assistance from spectators, other players, or the tournament staff. Any player asking for help from someone, or any player offering help to another player will be subject to a penalty at the head judge's discretion.

This rule shall not apply to a player's opponent. An opponent may always give and receive advice freely during play.

This rule shall not apply to any player who, due to a disability or injury, requires the assistance of another individual in some way. Such players should inform the head judge before play begins of the nature and type of assistance required so as to avoid any misunderstandings.

707.44 Slow Play and Stalling

Players must play in a timely manner. If a player takes excessive time to make decisions or attempts to stall for time, he or she will be subject to a penalty at the head judge's discretion. A player repeating the same action (excluding "Pass") during a phase, or a sequence of actions (such as moving a hero to a planet from a ship in the same location, and then moving the same hero back to the ship from the planet) a repeated number of times may also be subject to a penalty at the head judge's discretion.

707.45 Sleeves, Marked Cards, and Deck Stacking/Manipulation

Players may use card sleeves of any sort (including those with both transparent and opaque backs) provided that all sleeves are of the same type and color, all sleeves in the deck face in the same direction, and none of the sleeves are marked.

Players who intentionally mark their cards and/or stack or manipulate cards drawn from their decks will be disqualified from the tournament at the head judge's discretion.

707.46 Unsporting Conduct

Players must conduct themselves in a civil manner, and must treat other players, tournament personnel, and spectators with respect. Players who engage in unsporting behavior, including, but not limited to, profane language, arguing with opponents or tournament staff, or threats of or actual physical violence shall be disqualified from the tournament at the head judge's discretion.

Players engaging in such behavior at Storyline or championship events may be banned, at the sole discretion of Third World Games, Inc., from participating in future Storyline or championship events.

707.47 Cheating

Players must participate in the tournament in an honest fashion. Players who cheat will be subject to disqualification at the head judge's discretion.

Cheating includes, but is not limited to:

- Marking cards or sleeves.
- Stacking a deck or manipulating what cards a player draws from a deck.
- Misrepresenting game information purposefully.
- Misrepresenting game results purposefully.
- Stalling.
- Colluding to alter the results of a game or the tournament.
- Entering the tournament under false pretenses, including misidentifying oneself.

Players engaging in such behavior at Storyline or championship events may be banned, at the sole discretion of Third World Games, Inc., from participating in future Storyline or championship events.

708. Penalties for Rules Violations

Players who violate rules (whether intentionally or purposefully) will be subject to one or more penalties at the head judge's discretion. Whenever a player commits a violation, the head judge will evaluate the situation to determine what action, if any, is needed to correct the situation so the game may continue, and if a penalty should be issued. There are five penalties that may be issued to a player, depending on the severity of the infraction. These are (least severe to most):

1. **No draw**—At the end of the current turn, the player cannot draw any cards.
2. **Hand size reduction**—The player's maximum hand size is reduced by 1 (usually to 5) for the remainder of the game.

3. **Planetary attrition**—The head judge selects, at random, one of the player's non-Homeworld planets in play, and terminates it.
4. **Match loss**—The player loses the game. The opponent is awarded a 3-point actual victory, and the penalized player receives 0 points.
5. **Disqualification**—The player is ejected from the event and may not play in subsequent rounds. If a game is in progress, the opponent is awarded a 3-point actual victory.

709. Player Judge Rule

To maximize tournament enjoyment for all, it may sometimes be desirable for the head judge to participate in the tournament as a player. Whenever this occurs, the Player Judge rule will be invoked. The head judge must designate a non-player (usually the tournament organizer) whose responsibility it is to adjudicate situations involving the head judge and his or her opponents. The head judge continues to adjudicate all other disputes.