

What should I expect the first time I come to Asheville Scrabble Club?

We all came to Club "for the first time" so we remember that it can be intimidating. We are a friendly group and we try our best to make new players feel welcome, to help them along with competitive play, and to provide the support they need. We want you to enjoy yourself and to keep coming back. While every player plays to win, we know it's mostly about fun!

What's the difference between Club play and recreational play?

The main difference is that at Club play we play one-on-one and we use a clock (see details in next question). The other major difference is that Club players may use any word in the Scrabble dictionary whether they know the definition or not. Beyond that are ways to manage your tiles, and, developing your board vision for scoring and defensive opportunities.

Why do you use clocks?

Clocks give each player an equal amount of time (25 minutes) to play. Most games, then, take about 50 minutes. Using a clock becomes automatic quickly. When you first start at Club we are forgiving about going over the time limit.

Will I find players at my level if I feel like a beginner?

Yes. We have players at all levels in our club. In addition to newcomers, you'll have a chance to play Club members who have been with us since its inception in 2005. There's fun to be had and something to learn with every game you play.

Do you make allowances for newcomers at Club?

Yes! You may use a [Cheat Sheet](#) and have free challenges (no loss of turn) on unfamiliar words. Usually, first Sundays are when lower-rated players play only other lower-rated players. Those are especially good days for newcomers to try.

Do I need to bring my own Scrabble set?

No. We provide all equipment: boards, tiles, oversized racks for moving tiles around, clocks, and score sheets.

How do you know if a word played is acceptable?

We use a computer program with all the acceptable words to make the decision fairly and quickly.

Do you need to know the definition of a word to play it?

No. The word just needs to be on the Official Word List. Some players learn definitions to help them remember words and their parts of speech. This can be helpful when making subsequent plays that may include adding an "S" to a noun.

How are Club Player Ratings used?

Ratings help to make Club play fairer. You get free challenges (no loss of turn) on unfamiliar words played by your opponent if your opponent's rating is 300+ points higher than yours. We compute ratings using winning percentage, average spread, and scoring average. As a newcomer, you start out unrated until you begin to win games consistently.

Are game results posted on the Asheville Scrabble Club website?

Yes. We publish a weekly newsletter with website links to results from the previous Sunday, yearly stats, cumulative stats, and Club records. However, newcomers' results are NOT published until they establish a Club Rating (that occurs after a newcomer is winning games consistently). Our website, ashevillescrabble.com has many useful study features, too.

What about tournaments?

They are optional, but most players find them tremendously exciting. We have our annual Asheville A-1 Autumn Leaves Tournament with about 100 players from around the country. And, there are many other tourneys within driving distance.

Any special jargon used at Club?

Bingo- use all seven tiles in a play to get a bonus of 50 points added to the play's value. We'll teach you common bingos.

Hold!- announce "Hold!" when considering whether to challenge a play. This alerts your opponent to not draw new tiles that would make the play final. The hold continues on your time until you say "Challenge!" or accept the play.

Tally sheet- records your opponents' names, game scores, win-loss record, designated blanks, challenged words, and bingos and other high-scoring words. The Club statistician uses these to update stats weekly, monthly, and yearly.

Director- our Club directors, Bill Snoddy and Trish Harrop, know the rules and will help in unfamiliar situations.

What if I'm still nervous about trying the Club?

Understandable, but we want to help you have even more fun with the game we all love. We will teach you strategy, new words, and ways to manage the tiles on your rack. Your game will improve dramatically, and, soon, you'll make your opponents nervous! So, give us a try, be open to learning new ways to think about the game, and let's have fun together!