

Bo Jackson Battle Arena

Penalty & Procedure Guide · v1

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Penalty and Procedure Guide

This guide serves as a framework for handling rule violations in **Bo Jackson Battle Arena** during in-person play. Infractions — errors that break game or tournament rules — are categorized into three types:

- **Conduct** — player behavior
- **Gameplay** — violations of the game rules
- **Tournament** — violations of the Tournament Rules and Policy

This document outlines the most common infractions, provides procedures for addressing them, and defines appropriate penalties to maintain fair and consistent rulings.

Sections

🔗 Section titled “Sections”

- 1. General — addressing infractions, types of penalties, types of procedures
- 2. Conduct Infractions — bribery, cheating, unsporting conduct, etc.
- 3. Gameplay Infractions — game rules violations, hidden card errors, missed triggers, etc.
- 4. Tournament Infractions — decklist errors, slow play, tardiness, etc.
- Appendix A — Infraction Identification Guide
- Appendix B — Penalty Summary

1 General

1.1 Introduction

 Section titled “1.1 Introduction”

This guide serves as a framework for handling rule violations in Bo Jackson Battle Arena during in-person play. Infractions — errors that break game or tournament rules — are categorized into three types: **Conduct** (player behavior), **Gameplay** (violations of the game rules), and **Tournament** (violation of the Tournament Rules and Policy). This document outlines the most common infractions, provides procedures for addressing them, and defines appropriate penalties to maintain fair and consistent rulings.

The procedures and penalties in this guide serve two key purposes: educating judges on the recommended rulings for common infractions and protecting them from personal liability when enforcing these rulings. If a judge follows the guidelines outlined in this document, any disputes or complaints are directed at the policy itself, rather than the individual judge.

Additionally, this guide establishes clear expectations for players, promoting better gameplay by ensuring consistent enforcement of procedures and penalties. However, deviations from this guide do not offer the same level of protection or consistency, and judges should carefully consider this before applying a modified ruling.

There are three distinct **Rules Enforcement Levels (RELs)**: Casual, Competitive, and Professional. Each REL has unique expectations, and player infractions are addressed differently depending on the level.

- **Casual REL:** Tailored for local in-store play, this level focuses on fostering a welcoming environment for player education and enjoyment.
- **Competitive REL:** Designed for structured competition, this level aims to balance player education, enjoyment, and maintaining tournament integrity.
- **Professional REL:** Reserved for the most elite levels of competitive play, this level prioritizes tournament integrity above all else.

The *BO Jackson Battle Arena - Penalty Guide* establishes the procedures and penalties for judges to enforce at official tournaments with **competitive** or **professional** rules enforcement. This document ensures consistency in handling infractions, maintaining fairness, and preserving the integrity of the tournament.

This document will be updated as necessary, with any changes announced through communication channels operated by *Bo Jackson Battle Arena*.

1.2 Addressing Infractions

🔗 Section titled “1.2 Addressing Infractions”

Infractions are handled by first identifying the issue and then applying the appropriate procedures and or penalties.

- Judges should intervene in a match only when a rules violation occurs, a player requests assistance, or an investigation is required.
- Judges should not intervene for Missed Trigger infractions that warrant only a **Caution**, or for minor infractions resolved promptly by both players.
- When issuing a penalty, the judge must explain the infraction, resolution procedure, and penalty to all involved players.
- Any **Game loss or higher** penalty must be confirmed with the **Head Judge**, except for **Tardiness** and **Decklist** infractions.
- If multiple related infractions occur, each is addressed separately, but only the highest penalty is issued.
- If a ruling takes longer than one minute, a time extension (rounded up to the nearest minute) should be given.

Judges can make mistakes. If a mistake happens, the judge should acknowledge it, apologize, and correct it if possible. If a judge’s error causes a player to commit an infraction, the **Head Judge** may consider it as grounds for deviation from standard penalties.

Deviations

🔗 Section titled “Deviations”

In rare cases, an infraction may not fit neatly into the categories outlined in this document, or the standard procedure and penalty may not fairly address the situation while maintaining tournament integrity.

In such cases, the Head Judge has the authority to deviate from the recommended guidelines by applying a modified procedure or penalty. When a deviation occurs, the Head Judge must explain the standard policy and the reason for the deviation to all involved players.

Judges may consult the Head Judge and suggest a deviation when necessary, but the final decision rests with the Head Judge to ensure consistent application throughout the tournament.

Common Reasons for Deviation:

- A Warning is issued for a gameplay infraction, but adjusting the procedure results in a more equitable game state.
- The standard procedure or penalty does not fairly address the unique circumstances of an infraction.
- A player commits multiple related infractions at once, requiring an increased penalty to equalize the advantage gained.

Infractions in this guide are outlined in their most common forms. When an infraction occurs that does not fit neatly into these categories, judges must determine the appropriate fix and/or penalty, with final approval from the Head Judge.

When adjusting a ruling, judges should begin with the most relevant infraction and consider these three key questions:

- Will this help players learn?
- Will this ensure fairness?
- Will the integrity of the tournament be maintained?

Repeated Infractions

 Section titled “Repeated Infractions”

If a player repeatedly commits the same infraction or fails to correct their behavior after receiving a penalty, the judge or Tournament Organizer should escalate the penalty level for each recurrence to reinforce the importance of following the rules. This results in a progressively harsher penalty for repeated offenses.

Repeated infractions should normally result in the penalty being increased by one level each time the behavior occurs. For example, a fourth instance of an infraction that initially warranted a Caution may result in a Game Loss. In some cases, a larger escalation may be necessary.

Judges and Tournament Organizers should also consider a player’s history beyond the current event. If a player has a pattern of repeated infractions at previous tournaments, it may be appropriate to start with a higher penalty than what is outlined in this guide. For instance, a player with a history of Unsportsmanlike Conduct: Minor may receive a Warning or Game Loss instead of a Caution for their first offense at a new event.

Multiple Infractions

 Section titled “Multiple Infractions”

Players who commit multiple different infractions during an event are often simply uninformed or inexperienced. However, it is also important to recognize that some players

may deliberately commit various errors under the guise of mistakes to gain an unfair advantage. These players should be firmly discouraged from continuing such behavior.

The decision to escalate a penalty for a player who has committed different infractions throughout the event is left to the discretion of the judge or Tournament Organizer. While repeated infractions of the same type typically warrant escalating penalties, multiple different infractions may not always require increased penalties unless there is reason to believe the player is acting in bad faith.

1.3 Types of Penalties

🔗 Section titled “1.3 Types of Penalties”

Penalties are used to track infractions, educate players, and restore fairness when a violation provides an advantage.

All penalties, except “Caution,” should be recorded during the tournament to track player errors. When a penalty is upgraded or downgraded, the judge issues a more or less severe penalty, respectively. The penalties are listed below in ascending order of severity.

Caution

🔗 Section titled “Caution”

A Caution is a verbal warning for a minor infraction. It is used when the infraction does not provide the player with an advantage or when the issue can be resolved through the procedure and education without needing to be recorded for the tournament.

Warning

🔗 Section titled “Warning”

A Warning is a formal notice for a minor infraction. Repeated Warnings for the same or similar infractions may result in a more severe penalty.

Game Loss

🔗 Section titled “Game Loss”

A Game Loss immediately ends the current game, and the player is considered to have lost. It is issued when the integrity of the game is significantly compromised or as a severe penalty to emphasize the seriousness of the player’s actions.

If a Game Loss is issued between games, it applies to the player’s next game. In a best-of-1 format, a Game Loss results in the player losing the match. If Game Losses are issued to

all players simultaneously, the infractions are recorded, but the game proceeds as if no player lost.

Match Loss

🔗 Section titled “Match Loss”

A Match Loss results in the player losing the match, regardless of the game score. It is used when the integrity of the match is irreversibly compromised or as a more severe penalty than a Game Loss. If the player is between matches or the round time has ended, the Match Loss applies to their next match in the event. If all players are simultaneously issued a Match Loss, the match is recorded as a double match loss.

Disqualification

🔗 Section titled “Disqualification”

Disqualification results in a player being removed from the tournament. It is the most severe penalty and is applied for actions that compromise the integrity of the tournament or for serious conduct violations. A disqualified player loses their current match (if in progress) and is dropped from the tournament. They forfeit any prizes they were due, but may keep any prizes received up until that point.

Once disqualified, the player is no longer part of the standings, and all players below them move up by one position. However, if the disqualification occurs after a cut, no additional players will advance into the cut.

1.4 Types of Procedures

🔗 Section titled “1.4 Types of Procedures”

Procedures allow judges to adjust the game state to maintain its integrity. They should only be applied when relevant to the specific infraction. Judges should not use an unrelated procedure as a substitute for a penalty.

Cards to the Top or Bottom of the Deck

🔗 Section titled “Cards to the Top or Bottom of the Deck”

This procedure moves specific cards to either the top or bottom of the deck, as chosen by one player. If multiple cards are moved, the opponent decides the order and placement of each card. When applied correctly alongside other procedures, this helps balance information and strategic advantages gained through game or tournament errors.

Due to effects like *seek*, shuffling cards into the randomized portion of the deck is often impractical for many infractions. This procedure offers an alternative approach to restore game balance more effectively.

Partial Fix

🔗 Section titled “Partial Fix”

A partial fix artificially adjusts the game state to correct an infraction while minimizing disruption. When applied correctly, it helps balance an unfair advantage without requiring a full rewind or a harsher penalty.

Partial fixes should not be used if a player likely made a strategic decision based on the infraction or if the illegal action and its consequences are too complex to address in isolation.

Examples of partial fixes include:

- Correcting an incorrect action.
- Moving a card to the correct zone if it was placed incorrectly, remains known to all players, and does not majorly disrupt the game.
- Revealing a card that should have been previously shown to a player.
- Adjusting counters if the affected cards are known to all players and the change does not significantly impact the game.

Rewind the Game State

🔗 Section titled “Rewind the Game State”

Rewinding the game state restores the game to a previous legal state, removing any potential advantage gained from an infraction. However, it does not erase information a player has learned and, in some cases, may introduce unintended strategic advantages.

- **Simple Rewind:** Reverses the last action(s) and is used when an infraction is caught immediately.
- **Full Rewind:** Reverses multiple actions when the game has progressed beyond the infraction. A full rewind should only be performed if the judge can accurately reconstruct the previous legal game state without revealing additional information to either player.

Shuffle into a Random Portion of the Deck

🔗 Section titled “Shuffle into a Random Portion of the Deck”

Shuffling into a random portion of the deck involves taking the contiguous randomized portion of the deck, adding or removing cards, shuffling it, and then returning it to its proper place while keeping the non-randomized portions intact. When done correctly, this procedure eliminates any state or information advantage gained through an infraction.

Because certain effects may leave portions of a deck in a known order, shuffling the entire deck may not always be an appropriate fix for an infraction. Therefore, it should only be used as part of a deviation when appropriate for the specific game state and infraction.

2 Conduct Infractions

This category of infractions addresses inappropriate actions by players or spectators at an event, always assuming the actions are intentional. A player can receive an Unsporting Conduct penalty even if they are not actively participating in a match. While enjoyment is encouraged, participants must be mindful that their behavior can negatively affect others.

2.1 Bribery

 Section titled “2.1 Bribery”

Bribery occurs when a player offers or accepts an incentive to influence the outcome of a game or match. This includes concessions, prize splits, or any other form of compensation intended to manipulate match results. Bribery is strictly prohibited as it compromises the integrity of the tournament and creates an unfair competitive environment.

Bribery is treated as a serious violation of tournament integrity and typically results in immediate disqualification and potential further penalties from the Tournament Organizer. If a player suspects bribery, they should immediately report it to a judge for investigation.

Examples include:

- Offering an opponent cash in exchange for a concession.
- Proposing a prize split to encourage an opponent to concede.
- Agreeing to concede in a future event in exchange for a concession now.
- Offering to concede in return for a portion of a cash prize.
- A group of players coordinating concessions to manipulate tournament standings.

Recommended Starting Penalty:

- Competitive: Disqualification
- Professional: Disqualification

2.2 Cheating

 Section titled “2.2 Cheating”

Because cheating directly undermines the integrity of the game, it is treated with the utmost severity.

A player is considered to be cheating when they intentionally take or omit an action that violates the rules of the game or tournament in order to gain an advantage, or when they

lie to a tournament official. For an infraction to be classified as Cheating, the player must be aware that their actions are prohibited and must be actively trying to gain an advantage from those actions. If either of these conditions is not met, the infraction falls under a different category.

Examples include:

- Lying to a Judge during an investigation to influence the ruling in their favor.
- Deliberately swapping cards between the discard zone and their hand to manipulate the game state.
- Sneaking additional cards into a limited-format deck to strengthen its power.
- Noticing an opponent's rule-breaking mistake and intentionally choosing to remain silent to gain an advantage.

Recommended Starting Penalty:

- Competitive: Disqualification
- Professional: Disqualification

2.3 Improper Concession

 Section titled "2.3 Improper Concession"

An Improper Concession occurs when a player asks for a concession or concedes a match after time is called (after taking an action). It also includes any attempt to pressure, manipulate, or coerce an opponent into conceding. This infraction is separate from Bribery, which involves offering incentives for a concession.

Examples of Improper Concession:

- A player who is worried about the game ending in a **draw due to time** asks their opponent to concede so that at least one of them wins.
- After a game ends in a **draw**, a player **reveals their hand** and insists they "would have won with another battle" to pressure their opponent into conceding.

Recommended Starting Penalty:

- Competitive: Warning
- Professional: Game Loss

2.4 Rules Sharking

 Section titled "2.4 Rules Sharking"

Rules Sharking occurs when a player intentionally manipulates or exploits the rules to cause their opponent to commit an infraction or lose a valid game interaction. This behavior is considered unsporting and unethical, as it aims to gain an advantage through deceptive or predatory play rather than fair competition.

Malicious intent must be present; strict or methodical play alone does not constitute Rules Sharking. It is the Head Judge's discretion to determine what qualifies as Rules Sharking at an event. It typically results in a **Warning or Game Loss**, but repeated or particularly egregious cases may lead to **Disqualification**.

Examples Include:

- A player pressures their opponent to play quickly by saying, *"Hurry up and finish your turn,"* and then immediately calls a judge when the opponent **misses** a trigger due to the rushed play.
- A player quickly plays a card after their opponent takes an action and then immediately tells their opponent they've missed a mandatory trigger, calling a judge to enforce an infraction.

Recommended Starting Penalty:

- Competitive: Warning
- Professional: Game Loss

2.5 Stalling

🔗 Section titled "2.5 Stalling"

Stalling occurs when a player intentionally slows down gameplay to take advantage of the round time limit. This infraction is distinct from Slow Play, as Stalling requires intent — meaning the player is deliberately delaying actions to gain an unfair tournament advantage.

If a player is playing slowly but without intent to exploit the clock, it should be handled under Slow Play instead. Judges must determine intent by observing patterns of behavior, repeated actions, and timing within the round.

Examples of Stalling:

- A player who is ahead in the game suddenly starts playing significantly slower as the round nears its end, making it harder for the opponent to catch up.
- A player repetitively checks either player's Discard multiple times in a single turn without making meaningful progress, intentionally running down the clock.

- A player takes excessive time to shuffle, resolve effects, or make basic decisions in order to delay the game.

Recommended Starting Penalty:

- Competitive: Match Loss
- Professional: Disqualification

2.6 Unsporting Conduct

 Section titled “2.6 Unsporting Conduct”

Unsporting Conduct occurs when a player engages in behavior that is negative, offensive, or disruptive, impacting the safety or enjoyment of others. This conduct also includes actions that undermine the integrity or smooth operation of the event.

2.6.1 Unsporting Conduct - Minor

 Section titled “2.6.1 Unsporting Conduct - Minor”

Players are expected to treat all attendees and staff with respect at **Bo Jackson Battle Arena** events. Those who fail to do so should be reminded with an appropriate penalty. Infractions in this category do not disrupt the event’s operation but still require correction.

Examples include:

- Leaving minor trash in the tournament area.
- Roughhousing.
- Repeatedly touching or moving an opponent’s cards without permission.
- Disturbing an ongoing match.

Recommended Starting Penalty:

- Competitive: Warning
- Professional: Warning

2.6.2 Unsporting Conduct - Major

 Section titled “2.6.2 Unsporting Conduct - Major”

Players must act respectfully towards all attendees and staff at **Bo Jackson Battle Arena** events. Those who do not should be issued a penalty. Infractions in this category directly affect event operations or cause emotional distress to others.

Examples include:

- Leaving a significant amount of garbage in the tournament area.
- Failing to follow instructions from event staff.
- Attempting to manipulate a match through intimidation or distraction.
- Refusing to sign a match slip.

Recommended Starting Penalty:

- Competitive: Game Loss
- Professional: Game Loss

2.6.3 Unsporting Conduct - Severe

[🔗](#)Section titled “2.6.3 Unsporting Conduct - Severe”

Players must maintain respectful behavior towards all attendees and staff at **Bo Jackson Battle Arena** events. Penalties will be issued for those who fail to do so. Infractions in this category have a significant impact on event operations, cause major emotional distress, or involve physical altercations.

Examples include:

- Defacing the tournament area.
- Assault.
- Using physical threats towards players, event staff, or spectators.
- Theft.
- Using slurs or engaging in harassment.

Recommended Starting Penalty:

- Competitive: Disqualification
- Professional: Disqualification

2.7 Wagering

[🔗](#)Section titled “2.7 Wagering”

Wagering occurs when a player, or spectator places or offers bets on any aspect of the tournament, match outcome, or game-related event. This includes financial bets, item-based wagers, or any other form of stake. Betting by players and spectators is strictly prohibited as it undermines the competitive integrity of the tournament and can lead to

conflicts of interest or external pressure on players. Any instance of betting should be immediately reported to a judge or Tournament Organizer for investigation.

Examples Include:

- A player bets their rare promotional card that they will win the next round.
- A group of players places wagers on who will make the top cut.

Recommended Starting Penalty:

- Competitive: Match Loss
- Professional: Disqualification

3 Gameplay Infractions

Gameplay infractions occur when a player unintentionally violates the game's rules as outlined in the Bo Jackson Battle Arena Rules.

These infractions are generally assumed to be accidental, but if a judge believes the infraction was deliberate, it may be classified as Cheating, which carries more severe consequences.

Gameplay infractions are common mistakes but must be addressed consistently to ensure fair play and maintain the integrity of the tournament.

Judges should track repeated infractions to ensure that penalties scale appropriately. If a player commits three or more gameplay infractions of the same type during a tournament day (*excluding Failure to Maintain Game State*), the penalty for that infraction is upgraded by one severity level.

3.1 Failure to Maintain Game State

 Section titled "3.1 Failure to Maintain Game State"

A Failure to Maintain Game State infraction occurs when a player, by their inaction, does not acknowledge an opponent's gameplay infraction (*other than a Missed Trigger*).

Players share responsibility for maintaining a legal game state and should point out illegal actions as soon as they are noticed. The earlier an infraction is caught, the easier it is to rewind and correct without major disruption. If an infraction is allowed to continue, both players share responsibility for the resulting state advantage.

Examples:

- The opponent plays a card without having enough hot dogs to do so.
- The opponent substitutes their hero when a card effect would prevent them from doing so.

Recommended procedure:

Issue a Warning to the player in addition to the procedure and penalty for the original gameplay infraction. This Warning is never upgraded, even if repeated.

Recommended Starting Penalty:

- Competitive: Warning

- Professional: Warning

3.2 Game Rules Violation

🔗 Section titled “3.2 Game Rules Violation”

A Game Rules Violation occurs when a player fails to correctly apply the game rules to an element of the game they are responsible for, and the infraction does not fall under another specific Gameplay Infraction.

Players must ensure their actions (or inactions) follow the rules, and they also share responsibility when their effects interact with an opponent or instruct an opponent to perform an action.

If an opponent allows a Game Rules Violation to occur (and they are not responsible for it), they have committed a Failure to Maintain Game State. However, if both players share responsibility, then both have committed a Game Rules Violation.

Examples:

- A player plays a card or activates an ability without paying the full cost to do so.
- A player plays a card when an opponent’s effect prevents them from doing so (shared responsibility).
- A player lifts and checks their unrevealed Heroes after placement, or changes their order.

Recommended procedure:

If the infraction was caught immediately do a simple rewind to the moment before the infraction was committed. If the error was not caught immediately, the judge should attempt a Partial Fix where possible. If the game state cannot be safely adjusted, a rewind may be performed. If the game state cannot be fixed (partially or fully) take no further action, and the game continues despite the infraction.

If the game state cannot be rewound or partially fixed, and the player has gained a significant advantage from the infraction, upgrade to a Game Loss.

If the opponent had a reasonable opportunity to acknowledge the infraction but did not, issue a Warning for Failure to Maintain Game State.

If there is shared responsibility for the error, issue the opponent a Warning for Game Rules Violation.

If the infraction is because the player failed to pay the cost to activate a play, upgrade to Game Loss.

Recommended Starting Penalty:

- Competitive: Warning
- Professional: Warning

3.3 Hidden Card Error

 Section titled “3.3 Hidden Card Error”

A player, through their own actions, has made a mistake involving private cards that cannot be rectified using only public information.

If a player mixes private cards from multiple zones but they can still be properly sorted back into their original locations without revealing additional information, this is not classified as a Hidden Card Error.

If a player accidentally views cards they were not permitted to see, but those cards can still be correctly separated, the infraction falls under Looking at Extra Cards instead.

Examples:

- A player draws extra cards when drawing at the end of battle.
- A player accidentally draws two cards instead of one due to card sleeves sticking together, and the extra card touches their hand.
- A player plays, but the revealed card gets mixed into their hand.
- A player picks up a card from The discard zone and adds it to their hand.

Recommended procedure:

If a player has mistakenly combined private cards from multiple zones into a single group, they must reveal the entire combined set of cards to their opponent. The opponent will then determine how the cards should be redistributed, ensuring that each zone retains the correct number of cards as before the error occurred. Once the opponent makes their decision, the cards are returned accordingly. If one of the affected zones is the deck, the opponent chooses whether the card(s) should be placed on the top or bottom of the deck, in any order.

Recommended Starting Penalty:

- Competitive: Warning
- Professional: Warning

3.4 Looking at Extra Cards

🔗 Section titled “3.4 Looking at Extra Cards”

A player, through their own actions, unintentionally views cards they were not permitted to see, provided that the cards remain in their original zone.

If the mistakenly viewed cards become mixed with another set of cards and cannot be distinctly separated, the infraction is instead considered a **Hidden Card Error**.

Examples:

- A player sees extra cards when drawing.
- A player sees extra cards when revealing/looking at cards from their, or their opponent's, deck.
- A player sees cards from their opponent's deck while shuffling it.
- A player accidentally knocks some cards off the top of their deck face-up.

Recommended procedure:

If the extra cards belong to the player's non-randomized deck and were previously known to the player (due to effects like Reveal), leave the cards in their correct location. If the extra cards were not previously known, reveal them to the opponent, who will then decide whether each card should be placed on the top or bottom of the deck.

If the extra cards were seen during the drawing phase at the start of the turn, but the opponent has not yet acknowledged the change of phase (for example, if the opponent intends to play or activate cards or abilities), leave the cards on top of the deck as they were.

If the extra cards are part of the player's fully randomized deck, issue the player a Caution and shuffle the extra cards back into the deck.

Recommended Starting Penalty:

- Competitive: Warning
- Professional: Warning

3.5 Missed Trigger

🔗 Section titled “3.5 Missed Trigger”

A player, by their own inaction, fails to acknowledge the resolution of a triggered effect they control when it becomes relevant.

Acknowledging a triggered effect requires either a visible change to the game state or communication between the players confirming that it has triggered. Visible changes

include alterations to the existence and location of physical objects such as cards, tokens, and counters. Any player can acknowledge a triggered effect, not just its controller.

A triggered effect is considered missed if the player does not acknowledge it in a timely manner. However, it is not considered missed if any of the following conditions are met:

- **Decision-based triggers:** A triggered effect that requires the controller to make decisions (such as choosing targets or modes) must be acknowledged before the controller passes the turn.
- **Rule-changing triggers:** A triggered effect that impacts the rules of the game must be acknowledged before an action is taken, or acknowledged by stopping an action that would be made illegal by the triggered effect.
- **State-changing triggers with visible effects:** A triggered effect that visibly changes the game state, or requires a decision upon resolution, must be acknowledged before any player takes an action that could only occur after the effect has resolved.
- **State-changing triggers with non-visible effects:** A triggered effect that changes the game state in a non-visible way must be acknowledged before it first affects the game state in a visible manner.

In addition, the following cases are not considered a Missed Trigger infraction:

- **Optional effects:** If the only part of a triggered effect that would impact the game is optional, and it is not acknowledged, it is assumed that the controlling player decided to not generate that effect, and it is not considered an infraction.
- **Resolved effects:** If part of a triggered effect has already resolved and had a visible impact on the game, the trigger is considered acknowledged, and any unresolved part(s) of the trigger that are missed will be considered a Game Rules Violation instead.

Players are responsible for ensuring the resolution of any triggered effects they control. While players are not required to acknowledge triggered effects they do not control, they may still choose to do so. The controlling player is responsible for ensuring that any decisions or actions taken by the opponent during the resolution of the effect are legal and appropriate; they cannot assume the opponent will choose not to take any optional action.

Although it may be beneficial for a player to not acknowledge the triggered effects of their opponents, they may not intentionally cause the effects to be missed. A trigger is only considered missed if the controlling player acknowledges or allows the game state to progress past the point where the trigger is relevant, without acknowledging the effect first. Intentionally progressing the game state to cause an opponent to miss a triggered effect is considered **Rules Sharking**.

Missing the resolution of a triggered effect, like a Game Rules Violation, can undermine the integrity of the game and potentially create an advantage for the player. However, unlike deliberate actions such as playing a card or activating an ability, triggered effects occur as

a result of other in-game events rather than direct player decisions. Due to their frequency and the fact that they often do not visibly alter the game state immediately, players should not face severe penalties for missing them. That said, deliberately ignoring a triggered effect a player controls is considered **Cheating**.

Examples:

- A player plays *Victory Dinner* and wins the battle but forgets to recover the Hot Dogs before the next battle begins, the effect is missed.
- A player plays *Baby Phoenix* and forgets to add the +10 after both players take their turn before the next battle begins.
- A player plays *The Champion's Lasso* and forgets to recover hot dogs equal to the hot dogs the opponent spent in that Battle.

Recommended Procedure:

If the infraction is caught immediately, rewind the game to before the infraction occurred.

If additional actions have been taken, apply a partial fix as though the triggered effect resolved at the appropriate time.

If a partial fix is not possible, rewind the game to the latest point where the trigger should have been acknowledged.

If neither a partial fix nor a full rewind is feasible, take no further action, and the game continues as if the effect was triggered but did not resolve.

If the player would have gained a significant advantage from missing the trigger, and the effect was originally created by the player (not the opponent), issue a **Warning**.

Recommended Starting Penalty:

- Competitive: Caution
- Professional: Caution

3.6 Presenting Cards Error

 Section titled "3.6 Presenting Cards Error"

The player, by their own action, has presented an illegal set of cards or cards in an illegal state during the start-of-game procedure, despite having a legal decklist and card pool.

This infraction only applies once the player has a legal decklist and card pool. If the cards presented are deemed illegal, it is typically considered a **Card-Pool Contents Error**.

Examples:

- A player presents a deck with too many or not enough cards specified by the format.
- A player presents their starting hero deck but accidentally includes hot dogs or plays.

Recommended procedure:

If the game has not started and the presented deck does not contain the correct number of cards, the player must add cards from their card pool to reach the minimum required or remove cards to meet the maximum deck size.

If the game has not started and cards from the incorrect deck are discovered in the deck, remove the incorrect cards, and the deck should be reshuffled. Downgrade the penalty to a caution.

If incorrect cards are discovered after the game has begun, carefully remove the the cards while maintaining the order of the deck.

At a Professional REL, for all infractions except those involving hotdogs or plays being removed, upgrade the penalty to a game loss.

Recommended Starting Penalty:

- Competitive: Warning
- Professional: Warning

3.7 Shuffling Error

 Section titled “3.7 Shuffling Error”

A player, through their own action, illegally randomizes an ordered set of cards, such as a deck, in a way that violates game rules or tournament policies.

When a player shuffles a non-randomized set of cards, the integrity of the game state is irreparably compromised. This action may result in one of the players gaining an unfair advantage due to the redistribution of cards in the shuffled set.

Examples:

- A player shuffles their discard cards into their deck.
- A player absent mindedly shuffles their deck mid-game.
- A player counts the cards in their opponent’s deck, then shuffles it out of habit.

Recommended procedure:

Ensure the affected deck is sufficiently randomized before proceeding.

If the player has gained a significant strategic advantage through improper shuffling, upgrade the penalty to a Game Loss.

Recommended Starting Penalty:

- Competitive: Game Loss
- Professional: Game Loss

4 Tournament Infractions

Tournament infractions occur when a player violates the rules of the tournament as outlined in the Bo Jackson Battle Arena Tournament Rules and Policy. These infractions are presumed to be unintentional, but if a judge suspects intent, the infraction may be escalated to Cheating.

If a tournament rule is violated but is not listed as an infraction, the judge should educate and correct the player without issuing a penalty.

Ignoring a judge's instructions is considered Unsporting Conduct and will be penalized accordingly.

If a player commits the same tournament infraction twice in a single day, the second penalty should be upgraded by one severity level.

Tardiness and Slow Play are exceptions and do not escalate in severity.

For multi-day tournaments, the penalty count resets at the end of each day and does not carry over.

4.1 Card Pool Contents Error

 Section titled "4.1 Card Pool Contents Error"

The player, through their own actions, has presented cards that do not match their submitted decklist, even though the decklist accurately reflects what the player intended to play.

This infraction applies both when a player presents cards during a game and when they submit their card-pool to a judge for inspection. If there are cards stored near the player's card-pool that could reasonably be considered part of the registered card-pool due to their proximity, they are treated as part of the player's card-pool unless they are:

- Cards not listed on the decklist that are promotional cards distributed at the event.
- Cards listed on the decklist that have been proxied for the duration of the tournament.

These cards must be sleeved in a way that clearly distinguishes them from the actual cards in the registered cardpool to avoid confusion.

Examples:

- A player stores two of the same play cards in a playmaker tournament.

- A player stores a hero card, not listed on their decklist, with other heroes in their card pool.
- A player stores any amount cards that are not on their decklist but have been sleeved the same, within the same deck-box as their registered card-pool.

Recommended procedure:

Have the player remove any extra cards from their card-pool that are not listed on their decklist. Take note of any missing cards and educate the player that they may find replacements at their convenience.

If only cards are missing, downgrade to a Caution.

If the extra cards removed do not provide any strategic advantage, downgrade to a Warning.

If the player has extra copies of a card that did not impact the game, and the player reports the error immediately, downgrade to a Warning. If this was noticed while drawing or revealing cards, replace the draw/reveal with the next card instead.

If there is a significant discrepancy between the card-pool and the decklist, or the player has gained a strategic advantage from the card-pool, upgrade to a Match Loss. At professional REL, upgrade to a Disqualification.

Recommended Starting Penalty:

- Competitive: Game Loss
- Professional: Game Loss

4.2 Communicating Incorrect Game Information

🔗 Section titled “4.2 Communicating Incorrect Game Information”

A player, through their own action or inaction, has misrepresented non-private information or failed to fully answer a question regarding visible or public information, leading their opponent to make a decision based on incorrect or incomplete information.

Clear and accurate communication is crucial in Bo Jackson Battle Arena. Players are expected to maintain a transparent game state through effective communication and address any ambiguities or uncertainties. However, players may unintentionally make communication errors, particularly across cultural or language differences, and should not be penalized harshly for these mistakes.

Communication is not limited to verbal statements; it can also include physical representations, such as the positioning of cards in the play area or the use of counters or markers.

If an opponent makes an assumption about ambiguous information without seeking clarification, or if the incorrect or missing information does not impact their decisions, it is not considered a violation of Communicating Incorrect Game Information.

Examples:

- A player forgets or fails to announce that *Make It, Take It* grants their next Hero +5.
- A Player states they do not have any plays in hand, when they do.
- A player is asked for the total power of a hero in a battle and provides an incorrect total.

Recommended procedure:

If the game has not progressed too far to be rewound, revert the game state to the point just before the affected action occurred, rather than to the point of miscommunication.

At a competitive REL, if the miscommunication was caused by the player failing to update or remove a marker representing visible or public information, consider downgrading the penalty to a Caution.

Recommended Starting Penalty:

- Competitive: Warning
- Professional: Warning

4.3 Decklist Error

 Section titled “4.3 Decklist Error”

The player, through their own actions, has submitted a card-pool registration sheet (decklist) that either does not match the cards they intend to use or is otherwise illegal.

Decklists are crucial in competitive tournaments as they ensure that the cards a player uses (their card-pool) remain consistent throughout the event. This prevents any potential strategic advantages that could arise from altering the card-pool during the tournament.

If the decklist is legal and reflects what the player intended to play with, but there is an issue with the card-pool itself it is considered a Card-Pool Contents Error.

Examples:

- A player forgets to include a card on their decklist.
- A player lists “Bojax Fire” on their decklist but has “Bojax Ice” in their card pool instead.
- Decklist says *Victory Feast* instead of *Victory Dinner*.

Recommended procedure:

If the decklist does not reflect the cards the player intends to use, update the decklist to match the player’s intent.

If the decklist error is minor and is caught before the first round begins, or if the player reports the error themselves, issue a Warning.

If the discrepancy between the decklist and the player’s deck is significant, upgrade the penalty to a Match Loss.

Recommended Starting Penalty:

- Competitive: Game Loss
- Professional: Game Loss

4.4 Draft Procedure Violation

 Section titled “4.4 Draft Procedure Violation”

The player, through their own action, commits a procedural infringement during a draft.

Drafting is a critical procedure that occurs outside of the actual gameplay and involves strategic decisions that can influence the outcome of future games. Because of this, it should be monitored with the same level of scrutiny as the actual game itself. Players may gain an unfair advantage, information, or alter the state of the draft by failing to follow the established rules. Infractions are generally viewed as the result of ignorance of the draft procedures, but any deliberate violation to gain an advantage is considered Cheating.

In certain situations, it’s crucial for the Judge to avoid interrupting the player’s thought process, as doing so could slow down or disrupt the draft. The Judge should wait until the current pack, or in some cases, the entire draft, has concluded before imposing any penalties. This is particularly important if the penalty could result in disqualification, as interfering with the drafting process would not be ideal.

4.4.1 Draft Procedure Violation - Minor

 Section titled “4.4.1 Draft Procedure Violation - Minor”

The player commits a violation of the draft procedure that can be easily corrected or does not give them a significant advantage or negatively impact the fairness of the draft.

Examples:

- A player passes a pack to the wrong player or in the wrong direction.
- A player selects a card after the draft pick time has expired.
- A player starts looking around at other players or tables during the draft, distracting themselves or others.
- A player picks a card from the pack, places it on top of their draft pile, and then returns it to the pack, potentially affecting the flow of the draft.
- A player picks up and examines their draft pile during a draft round when not in an official review period.

Recommended procedure:

If necessary, pause the draft and issue the player a Warning. Ensure that pausing the draft happens at an appropriate moment, such as during or after a pick, at the end of a pack, or after the entire draft process, to avoid disrupting the players or the overall flow of the draft.

Recommended Starting Penalty:

- Competitive: Warning
- Professional: Warning

4.4.2 Draft Procedure Violation - Major

 Section titled “4.4.2 Draft Procedure Violation - Major”

The player commits a violation of the draft procedure that significantly disrupts the integrity of the draft process or gives the player a clear and unfair advantage, which cannot be easily corrected or reversed.

Examples:

- A player mixes up their draft pack and drafted pile, making it impossible to distinguish between cards that have been picked and those that haven't.
- A player verbally reveals their current or planned draft picks.
- A player examines another player's draft pack to gain strategic information.
- A player rotates a card upside down to signal their pick to the next player.

Recommended procedure:

If the infraction requires immediate attention, pause the draft at an appropriate time and address the player's behavior. After the draft concludes, issue the player a Match Loss. This ensures the player does not influence the draft knowing they have already received a loss, preventing any unfair advantage for themselves or disruption to other players still in the draft.

Recommended Starting Penalty:

- Competitive: Match Loss
- Professional: Match Loss

4.5 Insufficient Shuffling

 Section titled "4.5 Insufficient Shuffling"

The player, through their own inaction, fails to shuffle a deck of cards to sufficiently randomize the order of the cards.

Players can randomize their deck using various shuffling methods, such as riffle, overhand, or wash shuffling, and should use more than one technique for proper randomization. A final cut is recommended. Methods like pile counting or other deterministic shuffling techniques are not sufficient on their own. Players must shuffle thoroughly and efficiently to ensure a fair game.

Examples:

- A player completes their start-of-game procedure, riffle shuffles their deck only once, and presents it to their opponent.
- A player overhand shuffles while keeping the deck facing them and then presents it to their opponent.
- A player arranges their deck into six piles, stacks them together, and presents it without further shuffling.
- A player forgets to shuffle after searching their deck during the game.

Recommended procedure:

Supervise the player as they shuffle their deck and provide guidance if their technique is insufficient. Educate them on proper shuffling methods to ensure they understand what constitutes acceptable randomization.

Recommended Starting Penalty:

- Competitive: Warning
- Professional: Warning

4.6 Marked Cards

🔗 Section titled “4.6 Marked Cards”

The player, by their own action, presents a deck where one or more cards are easily distinguishable from the others while they are in the deck or face-down.

Players must ensure that all cards and card sleeves in their deck are in good condition and free from markings or features that make them identifiable while face-down or within the deck. This includes, but is not limited to, scuff marks, nail indents, bent corners, and card curvature.

If a player has deliberately marked their cards or intentionally exploited marked cards for an advantage, it is considered Cheating and will be penalized accordingly.

Examples:

- A player has an unsleeved deck where the card backs have varying colors with no discernible pattern to which cards have which colored backs.
- A player has a sleeved deck where some sleeves have bent corners due to flicking the cards, with no pattern to which cards are in which sleeves.
- A player has a sleeved deck where the image on the back of the sleeves has inconsistent border widths, with no pattern to which cards are in which sleeves.
- A player has a deck with a mix of foil and non-foil cards, where the foil cards are slightly warped, with no discernible pattern to which cards are warped.
- A player has a sleeved deck where a few sleeves have visible bubbles on the back, clearly a manufacturing error, with no significant cards in the affected sleeves.
- A player has a foil card that is warped and easily distinguishable from the rest of the deck.
- A player has a sleeved deck where one sleeve has a visible mark on the back, clearly a manufacturing defect, and the card in that sleeve is significant to their deck’s strategy.
- A player has three Heroes with the same power, each in sleeves of a slightly different shade compared to the rest of the deck.

Recommended procedure:

Require the player to re-sleeve or replace any marked cards to ensure no cards are distinguishable. The Head Judge may issue a proxy for the affected cards. The player cannot begin another match until the issue is resolved.

If marked cards are identified during a game and can be corrected quickly without disrupting play, the player must address them immediately. Otherwise, wait until the match is completed before informing the player and requiring corrections.

If the Head Judge determines that the marked cards could have provided a significant strategic advantage, the penalty is upgraded to a Match Loss.

Recommended Starting Penalty:

- Competitive: Warning
- Professional: Warning

4.7 Outside Assistance

 Section titled “4.7 Outside Assistance”

The player, by their own actions, receives strategic help from someone or something that is not part of the game, or provides strategic help to another player in a game they are not involved in.

If a player receives outside assistance during a game that provides them with a strategic advantage, the infraction will result in a Game Loss. This penalty ensures the advantage is completely negated, awarding the win to the opponent.

Examples:

- A player refers to matchup notes during the game, after the start-of-game procedure has concluded.
- A player communicates with a spectator through hand gestures, facial expressions, electronic devices, or other forms of communication.
- A spectator walks near a game in progress and reacts to cards in a player’s hand, unintentionally conveying private information to their opponent.

Recommended procedure:

If a spectator is also a player in the same event, issue them a Game Loss for their next match and remove them from the play area.

If the outside assistance is harmless or was done out of ignorance, downgrade the penalty to a Warning.

Recommended Starting Penalty:

- Competitive: Game Loss
- Professional: Game Loss

4.8 Slow Play

🔗 Section titled “4.8 Slow Play”

Slow Play occurs when a player takes excessive time to make decisions or perform actions that advance the game, without intending to manipulate the round timer.

Slow Play typically occurs without the player’s awareness (unlike Stalling). A simple educational reminder is often enough to improve the player’s pace and ensure the game completes within the time limit.

A Slow Play infraction should only be penalized if confirmed by a Judge through direct observation of the game’s progression. Spectators or player testimony alone should not be used as the basis for the infraction.

Judges should not provide additional time to the table based solely on reports or accusations of Slow Play.

Examples:

- A player repeatedly checks either player’s Discard before making a move.
- A player spends excessive time shuffling after searching their deck.
- A player holds one card in their hand and takes an unreasonable amount of time to decide their next action.

Recommended procedure:

Educate the player on the importance of playing at a reasonable pace. Observe the game to ensure the player makes one or two decisions at a reasonable speed.

If the player continues to play too slowly after receiving a Caution, issue a Warning and monitor their pace.

If the player receives two Warnings for Slow Play during the tournament, upgrade the penalty to a Game Loss.

Recommended Starting Penalty:

- Competitive: Caution
- Professional: Caution

4.9 Tardiness

🔗 Section titled “4.9 Tardiness”

A player is considered tardy if they are not at their assigned table when the round timer starts or if they have not completed a required tournament

procedure on time.

If a decklist is required and has not been submitted, the player cannot start their match and is considered tardy until the tournament organizer receives the decklist.

If a round begins earlier than scheduled (such as when all matches from the previous round finish early), tardiness is measured from the scheduled end time of the previous round.

The player who is present should notify a Judge if their opponent is late or arrives late so the correct penalty can be applied.

Judges may grant round start extensions for players needing extra time between rounds.

Examples:

- A player arrives at their seat five minutes after the round has started.
- A player mistakenly sits at the wrong table and only realizes after beginning a match with the incorrect opponent.
- A player mistakenly completes an entire match against the wrong opponent.
- A player loses cards from their card-pool and is unable to find replacements within 10 minutes.

Recommended procedure:

Extend the round time by the total amount of time the player was delayed since the round started.

If the player is less than 1 minute tardy, issue a Warning.

If the player is more than 10 minutes tardy, issue a Match Loss. If both players are more than 10 minutes late, issue a Match Loss to both players. The tardy player(s) should be dropped from the tournament before the next round pairing unless they report to the scorekeeper before that time.

If a player mistakenly completes an entire match against the wrong opponent, only the player at the incorrect table will receive a penalty; the opponent at the correct table will not be penalized.

Recommended Starting Penalty:

- Competitive: Game Loss
- Professional: Game Loss

Appendix A — Infraction Identification Guide

Situation	Likely Infraction
A player intentionally breaks rules to gain advantage	Cheating
A player offers money or prizes for a concession	Bribery
A player pressures an opponent to concede after time is called	Improper Concession
A player manipulates rules interactions to trap an opponent into an infraction	Rules Sharking
A player intentionally delays gameplay to run down the clock	Stalling
A player behaves disruptively or disrespectfully	Unsporting Conduct
A player or spectator bets on tournament results	Wagering
A player performs an illegal gameplay action	Game Rules Violation
A player notices an opponent's illegal play but does not say anything	Failure to Maintain Game State
A player mixes private cards and their original location cannot be determined	Hidden Card Error
A player accidentally sees cards they were not supposed to see	Looking at Extra Cards
A player forgets to resolve a triggered ability they control	Missed Trigger
A player presents an incorrect deck before the game begins	Presenting Cards Error
A player incorrectly shuffles or randomizes cards illegally	Shuffling Error
A player's physical card pool does not match their decklist	Card Pool Contents Error
A player provides incorrect public game information	Communicating Incorrect Game Information
A player's submitted decklist is illegal or incorrect	Decklist Error
A player violates drafting procedure during a draft	Draft Procedure Violation
A player fails to properly randomize a deck	Insufficient Shuffling
Cards in a player's deck are distinguishable from others	Marked Cards
A player receives strategic help from outside the match	Outside Assistance

A player plays excessively slowly without intent Slow Play

A player is late to their seat or match Tardiness

Appendix B — Penalty Summary

Infraction	Competitive REL	Professional REL
Bribery	Disqualification	Disqualification
Cheating	Disqualification	Disqualification
Improper Concession	Warning	Game Loss
Rules Sharking	Warning	Game Loss
Stalling	Match Loss	Disqualification
Unsporting Conduct – Minor	Warning	Warning
Unsporting Conduct – Major	Game Loss	Game Loss
Unsporting Conduct – Severe	Disqualification	Disqualification
Wagering	Match Loss	Disqualification
Failure to Maintain Game State	Warning	Warning
Game Rules Violation	Warning	Warning
Hidden Card Error	Warning	Warning
Looking at Extra Cards	Warning	Warning
Missed Trigger	Caution	Caution
Presenting Cards Error	Warning	Warning
Shuffling Error	Game Loss	Game Loss
Card Pool Contents Error	Game Loss	Game Loss
Communicating Incorrect Game Information	Warning	Warning
Decklist Error	Game Loss	Game Loss
Draft Procedure Violation – Minor	Warning	Warning
Draft Procedure Violation – Major	Match Loss	Match Loss
Insufficient Shuffling	Warning	Warning
Marked Cards	Warning	Warning
Outside Assistance	Game Loss	Game Loss
Slow Play	Caution	Caution
Tardiness	Game Loss	Game Loss

Changelog

v1

[🔗](#) Section titled “v1”

Initial port from BoBA Penalty And Procedure Guide v1.pdf.