



Upper Deck Judge Guide

I. General Philosophy of Judging

A. General Philosophy

Provide a consistent, fair, and enjoyable play experience for all players, while upholding the standards of the Upper Deck Organized Play program.

B. Know and Enforce Upper Deck Policy

Judges are expected to know and understand all Upper Deck (UD) Tournament Policies, which include, but are not limited to the following:

1. UD Tournament Policy
2. UD Penalty Guidelines (for all of UD's games)

C. Customer Service

Encourage the growth of Organized Play by creating the proper relationship between judges and players. One of the first rules of judging is “Provide players with quality customer service.” Judges should never be rude or belligerent towards a player or spectator during a UD event.

D. Strengthen the Judge Team

A judge team is only as strong as its weakest link. Judges should help each other out, ensuring a smooth and well-run tournament. Ego has no place in the Judge Program.

E. Grow as an Upper Deck Judge

Judges are encouraged to seek out additional opportunities to volunteer at events. With more experience, volunteer judges improve their chances to join the judge staff at prestigious events such as World Championships and 10Ks.

Judges should make the most of their available resources, such as rulings, the rulebook, and the policy documents. Discuss your judging experiences judging with your fellow judges, and seek mentoring from those who have more experience. Involvement in online forums and social media is beneficial, as long as judges remember to be professional, polite, and provide accurate information.

II. Important for all Judges

A. What is a Judge?

A Judge is a volunteer who assists a Tournament Organizer to run a tournament or event. These tournaments/events range from local hobby leagues to bigger events like 10Ks. Judges are expected to keep up to date on card rulings and tournament policies.

B. Duties of a Judge

1. Manage the Tournament - know and fulfill your duties.

2. Be a resource for the players

- Answer questions accurately and quickly, and provide good customer service.
- Keep informed on rulings, game mechanics, and tournament policy.
- Expect to see a number of newer, inexperienced players, who may be unaware of what to do at a tournament. Be aware of this when you are communicating with the players – don't assume everyone is on the same page.

3. Promote the game and Organized Play

- Let players know about additional upcoming events.
- Be prepared to give information about Organized Play in general and the types of OP programs that are available under Upper Deck.
- Acknowledge any parents who may be in attendance. They may have questions about the event.
- Be mindful of the first-time players who may be feeling intimidated.

III. Before the Event

A. Judge Uniform

Upper Deck will provide you all shirts during the event. Also, you must wear black pants – either black jeans or black slacks. No blue jeans, no shorts, no khakis, no ripped jeans, etc. Shoes should be comfortable since you'll be on your feet a lot. Sneakers are fine. No flip flops or sandal-type open toe shoes please. You also might want to bring one or two nicer-type shirts as we'll likely be having a judge and staff dinner one night, and maybe an Upper Deck party another night.

B. Location and Start Times

Judge should familiarize themselves with how to reach the tournament location, and arrive on site by the time specified by the Tournament Organizer. Judges should know the start time for the main 10K tournament as well as any side events (Win-A-Boxes, Beginner Events) held during the tournament.

C. Judge Team Assignments

All floor judges will be assigned a team for the duration of the duration.

Different teams have different responsibilities:

1. Floor Team – Should be on the floor at the start of round (unless drafted to help pass out result slips at the beginning of a round) to answer questions and supervise the tournament floor. Usually, the floor team lead will "zone" the judges in order to efficiently maximize coverage of the tournament area. For a 250 player tournament, there will probably be two assigned floor teams.
2. Deck Team (VS SYSTEM ONLY) – Should coordinate Deck checks, and participate in Deck infraction investigations. Deck team members not actively working on Deck issues should join the judges on the floor.
3. Paper Team – Should coordinate posting of pairings and the cutting and distribution of result slips. Paper Team members not actively working on paper issues will join the judges on the floor and be reassigned to a floor team for the duration of the round.

IV. At the Event – Before the First Round

A. Judge Meeting

The Head Judge should meet with the judge staff beforehand and provide the judges with their assignments. The Head Judge should answer judges' rulings and policy questions, so that everyone is making consistent rulings.

Judges may not create their own rulings or policy.

B. Player Registration

Sometimes, the Tournament Organizer will need judges to assist the event staff during registration, usually for line control. Once registration is over, judges should not double up on jobs, and should not be a part of the event staff.

Judges should patrol the floor and answer players' rulings and policy questions. If a Judge does not know the answer to a question, they should consult the Head Judge.

C. Player Meeting

The Tournament Organizer may begin the player meeting by making some TO-specific announcements. After the TO has made his/her announcements, the Head Judge should make all tournament specific announcements.

V. During the Event

- 1) Just before the beginning of a round, judges should prepare to receive from the scorekeeper the pairings (separated by alphabetized surname) and result slips for that round. Once received, paper team judges should begin to post pairings and start cutting result slips and placing each slip at its corresponding table number. All judges, regardless of team assignment, should help with passing out the result slips. At this point, the deck check team (if any), will be given a table number to deck check both players at that table. Judges who have finished posting pairings should help with passing out result slips, and judges who were initially given result slips should check back at the paper cutter to see if more slips need to be handed out.
- 2) As players are finding their seats, judges should go to the area where they are zoned. The head judge will make an announcement to begin the round. If there is a judge in charge of starting the tournament clock, now would be the time to make sure that judge is ready.
- 3) Deck check team, if finished with all deck checks for the round (initial and mid-round), should report to the head judge or the floor team lead for zoning assignments for the remainder of the current round. The judges responsible for posting the pairings should take those down at the 10 minute mark of the round. As players finish their matches, the winner of the match will be responsible for turning in the result slip at the tournament desk.
- 4) As a round starts to wind down (usually at the less than 5 minute mark), the floor team lead or head judge will coordinate with the scorekeeper to see how many outstanding tables are left. When time is called in the round, please make sure to verify with all of the players IN YOUR ZONE that they are in End-Of-Round (EOR) procedure, and give players assistance if they need it. It is not appropriate for a judge to sit down watching an EOR table if there are multiple EOR tables scattered about in your area. For judges not engaged with watching an EOR table, please make sure to communicate with the floor team lead (who will most likely be by the scorekeeper) to see how many outstanding tables are left in the round (so judges can check the floor to make sure people are really still playing at those tables and it isn't a case of a missing result slip).
- 5) It is common for the tournament floor in the final minutes of a round to look less than pristine and orderly. Judges should be actively pushing in chairs and picking up garbage in order for the floor to look clean at the beginning of the next round.

VI. Judge Responsibilities & Expectations

Active Judging

Judges should actively walk around the area that they are assigned to and look for suspicious games or games that might run long. They should also actively scan the area for players who need help and promptly walk to a player who needs assistance. Players that need assistance will raise their hand and call for a judge.

Judges should know most commonly played cards and decks. This will aid in spotting procedural errors that are missed by both players. Judges should step in any time a player is committing an error, even if neither player called a judge.

Clean Up

Players will often leave trash in the play area or leave their chairs pushed out. When possible, instruct players to keep up after themselves, however, **ALL judges (regardless of team assignment) are ultimately responsible for keeping the tournament area clean.** At the end of the round, whenever a judge is not watching a match, they must pick up trash, push in chairs, and straighten tablecloths and table numbers. At the end of the day, all judges must stay and help to clean up. Do not leave without first checking in with your floor team lead and/or head judge to see what clean up needs to be done.

Conduct

Judges should work hard to appear professional and vigilant. As such, do not sit at matches unless the time for the round has ended. Also, there is a tendency for judges to cluster in groups especially if the matches on the floor have diminished or there seems to be an interesting ruling occurring. Judges should disperse and avoid this. **Under no circumstances should a judge interfere with the rulings call of another judge.** If a judge overhears another judge giving an incorrect ruling, the judge should not rudely interrupt. Instead, the judge should politely and firmly address the player(s) and say, "Excuse me, but I need to consult with my colleague for a moment." At that point, the judges should keep some distance from the players in order to discuss the ruling discreetly. Finally, judges should be in the proper uniform at all times, unless if they are on a break.

Eating

Food and beverages should not be kept around the tournament floor, eating should take place only in designated areas, and breaks should be taken away from the tournament area. Only the scorekeeper should keep food or beverages at the tournament desk. Judges frequenting the stage to pick up food or drink creates an unprofessional look and distracts those with business on stage from their tasks. Food and drinks must be kept in the judge area of the event. All judges are entitled to ONE 30 minute break for lunch and ONE 15 minute break during the tournament.

Penalties

Penalties must be clearly noted in RED INK on the match result slip. After clearly explaining a penalty to the player, note this by writing the penalty by the player's name (a "W" for a Warning; a "PD" for a Point Deduction; a "GL" for a Game Loss; a "DQ" for a Disqualification). On the reverse side, write clearly the following: player name (last name first), the infraction committed, the penalty given, a brief description of what happened, and your name. When noting a penalty, it is best to fill out the slip away from the match.

For example, let's say I sit down to play Legendary and a couple of turns in, I forgot to draw a card from the Villain deck at the beginning of my turn. By failing to do this, I have also forgotten to KO a Hero from the HQ (as a Villain should have entered the already filled city, and pushing another Villain to the Escape Pile). I notice all this at the end of my turn and call for a judge. Judge Kim Pavelka would write down my penalty (a Point Deduction of 3 points) for receiving a Game Error - Major on the reverse side of the slip:

Sangpukdee, Simon - GE Major - Point Deduction 3 pts - Failed to draw Villain Card at start of turn and didn't KO a Hero from HQ when supposed to - Kim Pavelka

Finally, when giving a penalty, always ask the player if they have been given a penalty before for a similar infraction. The head judge should be notified if it turns out that player has been penalized before for a similar infraction during the same tournament.

Procedure for Making a Ruling

The judge who is called to a table is expected to make a ruling. That judge may consult with another judge away from the match if a rule or a policy needs to be clarified, but the judge called over still makes and presents the ruling to the players. It is highly recommended that the judge talk to both players in order to determine the state of the game and therefore having accurate information in order to give the best ruling. Note all cards that are in play and if in doubt, read the cards so nothing is taken for granted. Be mindful of the difference between coaching and giving a player an appropriate answer. Whenever a ruling takes more than a minute, extra time might be appropriate for the match. If a judge grants extra time for a long ruling, the number of minutes should be noted in the lower left corner of the match result slip with the judge's initials.

If players should disagree with a judge's decision, they are free to appeal the ruling to the head judge. The head judge has the right to overturn other judges' decisions. **Players may not appeal to the head judge before the judge responding to the situation renders an initial decision.** The head judge's decision is final.

Slow Play

All players are responsible for playing at a prompt pace. If a player is found to be engaging in slow play, he or she will receive a penalty and a time extension of **three minutes** will be added. If a judge believes a player is intentionally slowing the pace of play to their advantage, the Head Judge should be notified. If the Head Judge believes that a player is intentionally stalling, that player will be disqualified from the tournament.

Social Media

While you are judging, please observe the following guidelines regarding social media:

Stay off of social media while the 10K tournaments are in session. That includes posting and checking to see what is going on. That includes while you are on your break. This might not seem fair, but look at this way... the people seeing your posts don't know you are on your break. As far as they know, you are posting while you are out on the floor. After the tournament is over and you've been released for the day, you can check Facebook, Twitter, etc.

You are there to judge, not to do coverage! Don't text, email, or post information or photos about the event to your friends, news sites, forums, etc.

Unless you are given the okay by an Upper Deck employee, please do not take photos or videos while the tournament is in session since judges are not cleared as press.

After premier events such as World Championships or 10Ks are over, judges should practice decorum and professionalism when discussing the tournament online and via social media.

Judges should never comment on things such as disqualifications, player investigations, or other situations that happen at an event. Judges should not get involved in disagreements about an event. If you see a real problem brewing on an online forum or a social media platform, then send an email to Legendary_Events@upperdeck.com and Upper Deck will handle it.

Speech

Judges should speak courteously and respectfully. Judges will not raise their voices or argue with players. Judges will not make personal or derisive comments about the players and/or their decks and skills. Remember, you are representing yourself, the tournament organizer, and Upper Deck at this tournament. Please act accordingly.

Sporting Conduct

The promotion of good sportsmanship is a high priority in the event. Participants, judges, and staff in the event are expected to behave in a mature, professional, and sporting manner at all times before, during, and after the tournament. Participants in the event are expected to dress in an appropriate, non-offensive, and professional manner. If a judge feels he is being disrespected by a player, it is appropriate to assign the offending player a minor penalty for Unsporting Conduct (which is a warning). If this is not the first time the player has been disrespectful, or if the behavior is so offensive that a warning is not a sufficient penalty, then the head judge should be notified to determine whether a more severe penalty would be warranted.

Tardiness

Players are expected to be seated and ready to play at the start of each round. Failure to be seated and ready to play after three minutes have passed will result in a penalty for the absent player. Please refer to the penalty guidelines for each game when assigning the Tardiness penalty. Write down the appropriate penalty by the player's name on the result slip (Writing a "T - 3 min" by the player's name is a recommended notation).

After ten minutes, if the player has still not shown up, then simply write "NO SHOW" in the space where the player's signature is supposed to be. The judge marking all this should also write down their initials next to the drop box. For tardiness penalties, DO NOT write out the penalty on the reverse side of the slip.