



Tournament



Journal



The top 10 things players do to slow down a tournament.

You might not think that what you do really matters in the grand scheme of a tournament, but multiply any delays you cause by the number of the other attendees there: at a large event like a Shonen Jump or big Regional, you're looking at a possible ten minutes extra time per/between rounds. Having nine or ten rounds? Add over an hour of wasted time and work to the actual event. I don't know about you, but I'd far rather be done on time—especially when it's a convention setting and there will be more events to enter or work, or if you've driven far . . . or if you've still got some coverage to finish up!

Anyway, several of the judges told me that I should write an article about how the players were slowing down the events. I've written about some of these things in the past, but never presented as a cohesive “how not to waste time” article. So I'm going to present to you the top ten things players do that bog down a tournament. If players can learn to stop doing these things, I think they'll be pleasantly surprised by how much faster their events go. To make the reading easier, I'll divide it up into two parts—pre-event and during the event.

Let's get started with the top five things players do to delay the start of the event!

- **Arriving late and not ready to register.**

Sometimes traffic, oversleeping friends, car troubles, and so forth can be beyond your control, but if you have a habit of arriving very late, start leaving earlier. Make sure you have your Yugioh number, your deck, enough cash, and any other information you'll need in order to fill out your registration. Check beforehand to get directions to unfamiliar venues, and find out about parking. Be prepared to pay for parking in case that becomes necessary. If you figure you'll get there ten minutes before registration closes and then find you have to park about a mile away, you might be out of luck.

And get there early! Just because registration closes at 10:00 doesn't mean you should arrive at 9:55. Sure, most TO's will extend registration time to accommodate everyone, but that doesn't make it cool to show up at ten on the dot. All the people who put forth the effort to be on time don't deserve to be kept waiting for an hour and a half because a hundred more people rolled in three minutes before the deadline. There will always be a line and there's always the chance for a delay, so keep that in mind.

- **Not having a deck ready to play.**

You really should be prepared to play once you arrive on site—your deck (or decks, if you haven't quite made up your mind) should be put together and in matching, clean, unmarked sleeves. Arriving at the event and then running around frantically trying to trade for the last cards you need can delay the start considerably, especially if you didn't show up and get registered early. Plan what you'll play in advance, so if you need something you don't have in order to finish your brilliant deck, you can trade for it or borrow it before you go to the event. If you absolutely have to get it at the event, try to make arrangements beforehand with someone you know will be there. And get

there early! You'd better bring a backup too, in case your waiting cards don't materialize.

- **Showing up with an illegal or unplayable deck.**

It takes time to correct an illegal deck, and it's a hassle for the deck-check team. So you need to know what you're doing when you build your deck, and make sure it's legal *before* you leave for the tournament! Double-check that you have at least 40 cards, and only the allowable numbers of each. Review the semi-Limited and Limited lists for your format (you can find current ones [here](#)), and don't include any Forbidden cards. Don't forget about your side deck, too. It needs to be fifteen cards exactly, and the cards you include in the side need to be in line with the format. I have seen decks with a [Mystical Space Typhoon](#) in the main deck, and another in the side.

The deck should be in clean unmarked matching sleeves, and you should have extra sleeves in case you need to change damaged sleeves (instead of running to the dealer area to buy new ones). You don't want to have to play without sleeves because your sleeves are marked and you don't have money or extras—it damages your cards, and if you are playing with worn cards, the deck will be unplayable.

- **Not knowing if their cards/deck actually work.**

Time you spend arguing with opponents and judges is time *not* spent finishing your duel. If you come up with a tricky combo or a hot piece of tech, make sure it actually *works*. People do show up at large events with decks that flat-out don't work, and it's a huge pain for everyone involved to explain why and deal with the upset player who has now wasted his or her time and entry fee. The example that springs to mind is [Appropriate](#) comboed with [Chainsaw Insect](#)—it looks *sooo* good until you realize you can't flip [Appropriate](#) in the damage step, when [Chainsaw Insect](#)'s effect triggers. Make sure you know what you're doing, and double check rulings first.

- **Having an incomplete, poorly, or incorrectly filled-out decklist.**

You can download a decklist form from ude.com or from most TO's sites, and getting that ready before you even arrive at the event can save a lot of time. Having the decklist ready to go is enormously helpful, especially if you can type it out or spend enough time on it to print neatly. Frantically filling out your decklist during the player meeting while lists are being collected is the exact opposite! You're supposed to have it done beforehand, and when you rush through it, you are more likely to make a mistake, or just have really awful penmanship or indecipherable card abbreviations. Sloppy, incorrect, or unreadable decklists slow down the preliminary deck checks, keeping judges off the floor and delaying verifications that can avoid penalties. They also slow down deck checks—judges have to be able to read your list, and it needs to match your deck. If it's neither of those, you'll probably get a penalty, and you'll certainly have a longer wait to get your deck back. Sure, you'll get a time extension, but that will cut into the start of the next round.

So decide on your deck beforehand, fill out your decklist carefully and neatly, and hand it in when you're requested to do so. Make sure you write your name on it! Include your side and fusion decks if you're using them, and if you aren't, write "no side deck" or "no fusion deck" on your list. This will save the deck check team a lot of time and trouble, since they have to verify that you don't have one.

And one more thing . . .

- **Write out the full name of the card.**

Don't write something ambiguous like "magician" or "Nobleman" that can mean one of several different cards. Don't use abbreviations like "ROD" or "MF". Just because people know what that means online doesn't make it acceptable for a decklist. You might get penalized, and you'll deserve it. It's hard going through hundreds of decklists, and lazy players make it even harder.

This isn't an exhaustive list of all the things that players do, but these are the big ones. Players shouldn't think of themselves in an isolated sense—it's easy to go, "Oh well, so I got there a minute after registration closed, no big deal. They still let me in and it only took six minutes to get me signed up." What you need to realize is that you're not the only person in the event doing this kind of thing. One player doesn't make or break an event, but players *en masse* certainly can. If everyone makes the extra effort to avoid slowing things down, the event is going to move faster and end sooner, and we can all go out and get a decent dinner for a change!

Next I'll talk about five things players do that slow down the event as the tournament is going on. Read on, and take it to heart. Let's put an end to the 1:00 am last round!

In the previous part I started a series about the top ten things players do that can slow down a tournament. I daresay you saw yourself in at least a *few* of those segments, and I hope you'll make a real effort to change from now on. Anyway, last time we looked at some things players do that can delay the start of the event, and next we're going to go over a few things players do during the event itself that can add to time between rounds and just generally slow things down. Let's get started!

- **Not keeping track of your stuff so that it gets lost or misplaced (or stolen).**

Players, you need to keep track of your stuff! If you leave your bag and jacket and binder spread all over, you're going to lose them . . . and then create a delay while you're bugging the judges and staff to find your things for you. If you lose your deck, that could knock you out of the tournament or at least delay the start of your next match while you struggle to find it or replace the cards in it. Most of the time, the head judge will let you rebuild the deck and provide your decklist so you can do it, but that does add time to the round. Don't bring more things to the event than you can keep track of. Pay attention to your belongings and keep them safe and accounted for.

Besides, judges need to be focusing on the event and answering questions, not scooping up abandoned possessions from the tables and floor. If you do lose something, go up to the TO area and check for a lost and found. You'd be surprised—sometimes people lose things and don't go up and claim them.

- **Making a mess in the tournament area.**

You are not supposed to eat at the tournament tables, but that doesn't stop a lot of players. There are good reasons why you're not supposed to do it, too—spilled food and drink damages the tablecloths and cards. Wet or dirty tablecloths need to be replaced, tables might have to be moved, and occasionally a player is disqualified because his or her cards are damaged to the point that they can no longer be used. If you can't replace the deck, you can't continue to compete, and resolving all of these problems takes time and slows down the round.

You're also supposed to throw out your own trash, but a lot of players seem to think the judges are actually a maid service, and just leave their garbage strewn all over everywhere. While judges do clean up trash, straighten the tables, and push in the chairs, they actually do have other work to do, especially at a large, busy event. Don't add to the workload or confusion—if you make a mess, for goodness sake clean it up. Throw away the remains of your meal, your used card sleeves, your booster pack wrappers . . . whatever it is you usually leave all over the table. Push in your chair when you're done, and if you mess up the tablecloth, pull it straight again. Piles of garbage, crooked tables, knocked-over chairs, and tablecloths pulled askew make the tournament environment feel chaotic. That can make players feel even less responsible for their actions. They see the mess and figure anything goes! That kind of attitude makes it even harder for the tournament to continue in a timely manner. Don't contribute to the mess—clean up after yourself, and if you see a chair in the aisle, don't step around it. Push it back in. I guarantee it won't bite you.

- **Not handing in match slips, or filling them out incorrectly.**

When your match is over, the winner needs to bring the match slip up to the scorekeeper as quickly as possible. Yes, I know you want to de-side your deck and talk to your opponent or your friends who were watching, but the scorekeeper needs that slip right away. Maybe you think scorekeepers save them up and enter them all at the end, but most scorekeepers enter the slips in batches as they come in, especially at larger events. Turn the slip in as close to immediately as you can manage, and *that counts double* if your match went over time. You're holding up the whole event—get that slip turned in!

I've probably said this about a million times, but don't sign your match slip until the match is over, the winner box is checked, and you have verified that the info is correct. Coming up as the next round is beginning to say, "Hey, I won my last match and you have me listed as losing!" causes a lot of delays that can be avoided. If you win the match, check the winner box and sign the slip. Give it to your opponent to sign. Look it over again to make sure you both did it correctly. Then take it up and hand it in, and you don't have to worry about a mis-marked slip. If you are

inadvertently marked as the loser as a scorekeeper error, the slip can be retrieved and all will be well . . . provided that you catch the error before the next round passes.

- **Not being on time for the start of the round.**

If you're really late, you'll get a game or match loss. While a match loss will certainly make the round go faster, you probably won't be very happy about it. If you're kind of late, you're just slowing down the start of your round and it might go past time. It's sloppy behavior, so be punctual. Don't go wandering off between rounds, and always listen for announcements.

- **Slow play extending past the scheduled end of the round.**

Yu-Gi-Oh! TCG matches are forty minutes long, and in that time you are expected to be able to finish three duels. If you can't seem to finish a match on time, you are definitely playing too slowly. It's time to speed things up! You should not have to check both graveyards, repeatedly ask how many cards are in your opponent's hand, check each and every set card on your field, and read and re-read all the cards in your hand whenever you're going to make a move, or as a response to your opponent. If you are doing this, you are stalling, and eventually someone is going to call you on it. If you've got a complicated play to figure out or a bit of math to do, fine, but ordinarily you shouldn't need more than fifteen seconds tops to decide what you're going to do.

If you are deliberately playing slowly to force an end-of-match procedure, then shame on you. As judges become more willing to crack down on slow play, you're going to risk some unsporting conduct penalties, which will go beyond a mere warning. The entire tournament should not have to wait for you to finish just because you're trying to get a sneaky win.

If you've ever been to an event that never seemed to end, you most likely blamed the staff—you figured that the TO didn't manage it well, or that the judges “sucked”—and you possibly went and posted about it someplace. I'll bet you never spared much thought to what the *players* were doing to contribute to the slow pace. While it's true that a too-small or unprepared staff can slow an event down, players have a *huge* amount of influence on how quickly the event runs. Was there an hour-long delay starting the event? It could have been a slow registration, but how about those eighty players who came in just before registration was closing? A missing match slip that held things up while the players were located? Hardly ever the fault of a judge. Three tables overturned as players jumped to get out of the way of a tipped-over Big Gulp? The TO wasn't responsible for that! Ten matches going over time because players were trying to force an end-of-round sudden death? Apart from increased pressure from judges to play faster, this is a player issue.

If you want to complete your tournament at a reasonable time, then look at what you're doing that could be delaying it, and make the appropriate changes. Encourage other players to avoid doing them too—don't fall back on the “everyone else is doing it”

excuse to justify slowing down the event. Do your part—you just might be surprised at how much faster your tournaments seem to go.