

Thanks to Phil Robertshaw for his work producing this document which will be added to and updated over time.

ISC operates using a lot of commands, which can be entered in the Command prompt at the bottom of the screen. Typing 'HELP COMMANDS' in this box will bring up a list of all the possible commands you can use. You can get more information on each of these and how to use them by simply typing 'HELP [command name]' - e.g. 'HELP ADJOURN'.

Q: How do I start a game?

A: Typing the command MATCH followed by the ISC handle of your opponent will send a match request to that person using your current settings. To ensure that the settings are correct for the tournament, use the Game tab at the top, followed by Match. This brings up a box where you can tweak the settings for the game to the correct timer and challenge mode for that event.

If you're playing outside an ABSP event and just want a random game, the SEEK command will send out a request to all players who match your settings.

Q: What if I can't match my opponent?

A: This could be for a number of reasons, usually to do with their 'variables' that they have set up. For example it is possible to set your 'formula' so you only receive match requests from buddies, those above a certain rating or those who have signed ISC's Fair Play Agreement. If there is an issue, it's best to use the TELL command to communicate with the person, or inform the person running the tournament.

Q: How do I do tile tracking?

A: ISC tracks the tiles for you! When there are fewer than 46 tiles in the bag, these (including your opponent's tiles) are listed along the bottom of the screen (in WordBiz – in ISC you need to click the 'bag'). This can sometimes be difficult to read, especially if there are multiple I's! But typing the command POOL gives a numerical count of all the unseen tiles.

Q: When the game ended, it didn't subtract the tiles left on my opponent's rack. Why?

A: ISC uses the American system for this whereby the person ending the game receives double the value of the tiles on the opponent's rack, and nobody loses score. Overall this leads to higher cumulative scores, but the spread is the same.

Q: What happens if I go over time?

A: ISC allows you to go a maximum of one minute over time. The additional minute automatically deducts 10 points from your score, as in a regular ABSP game. However you forfeit the game if you use up this minute! This is unlike ABSP games where you have longer. Forfeiting on time in this way in an ABSP tournament will automatically incur a loss by 100 points or the current spread, whichever is the greater.

Q: What are the challenge modes?

A: ISC gives four options: single (free challenge), double (you miss your turn for a wrong challenge), void (automatic validation) or 5 point penalty challenge. In the latter case, ISC deducts 5 points from the challenger rather than giving it to the person who played the word, so it is possible to have -5 points at the start of a game if you challenge the first word!

Q: What happens with consecutive zero scores?

A: This is different to the WESPA rules used by the ABSP. On ISC, if you have four consecutive zero scores, the game ends (instead of the six used in regular tournaments).

Q: What if there's a problem and we need to pause the game?

A: Type ADJOURN into the command box and the opponent needs to accept the adjournment. This effectively stops the clock and gives you chance to communicate with the tournament organiser. To restart the game, MATCH the opponent again, once you've checked they are ready. RESUME brings up a list of any currently adjourned games.

Q: What happens if I was due to start the game and my opponent is given the start by ISC?

A: ISC issues random starts. If it gives it to the wrong person, this person should pass. If they fail to do this, the game should be adjourned (see above) and the tournament organiser notified straight away. Don't simply ABORT the game as this could be unfair.

Q: How do I report the results?

A: This will depend on the tournament you're playing and what the organiser wants. Some may note these for you by looking at your HISTORY, others may want you to tell them directly.

Q: Can I look back at a game I've played to see what I could have done better?

A: Yes, your last 10 games are preserved in your HISTORY, numbered from 0 (the most recent) to 9. To look again at your last game, type EXAMINE HISTORY [player handle] 0 e.g. EXAMINE HISTORY WAKEYWAKEY 0, if you want to look at Wayne Kelly's most recent game! You can look at any player's games in this way. Note that if you are a contributory member to ISC, where you are a subscriber, you can also access a bot which suggests the best moves on each turn. This is less sophisticated than Quackle or other sims. For more information, type HELP EXAMINE.

Q: How do I communicate with other players in the tournament?

A: There will usually be a chat 'channel' for this purpose; currently channel 88 is being used. Typing CHANNEL +88 will join the channel; to leave it use CHANNEL -88. Note that this is not an exclusive ABSP channel and other regular ISC players could be using it too. For more information about how to see and use the channel, use HELP CHANNEL and HELP QUIETPLAY.

Q: Can I observe another game?

A: Yes, if you're not currently playing. The OBSERVE command followed by the handle of one of the players involved will show you what is going on, unless one of the players has blocked this. However you should obviously not communicate in any way with either player while the game is going on. The WHISPER command allows all watchers of a game to discuss

it with each other without the players seeing the discussion. KIBITZ is seen by the players and would not be appropriate.

Q: What is 'noplay'?

A: The NOPLAY command blocks another person from matching you or communicating with you. This should not be used for other players in the tournament! This is best only used if you are experiencing abuse from or difficulties with someone else on the site. If someone uses abusive language, the REPORT command is also helpful and may lead to someone being censored.

Q: Where can I find out more?

A: The ISC HELP files are really good at explaining everything on the site. Using HELP COMMANDS gives you an overview of anything you need to know, but there are also helpers on the site, marked with an (H) next to their name. You can use the Help tab at the top of the screen to ask a specific question, and someone will get back to you.