

# USC - Major

*Words mean things. If that is how you talk when you are with your kid friends, that is your business, but if you want to interact with the adults, you are going to have to face the reality that words mean things. You aren't talking to hear yourself speak. Whenever you talk, whoever can hear you is your audience. Remember what it is you are doing.” -Patrick Chapin,  
<http://fivewithflores.com/2012/12/words-mean-things-by-patrick-chapin/>*

# USC - Major

**Trigger warning. May use objectionable language or discuss uncomfortable topics.**

# New Definition

**A player takes action towards one or more individuals that could reasonably be expected to create a feeling of being harassed, threatened, bullied, or stalked. This may include insults based on race, color, religion, national origin, age, gender, disability, or sexual orientation. Threats of physical violence should be treated as Unsporting Conduct – Aggressive Behavior.”**

# A quick note

- This seminar based heavily on article on philosophy changes  
(<http://blogs.magicjudges.org/seacat/2014/07/14/updating-unsporting-conduct-major/>)

# Changes from previous version

- Based on Safe Spaces initiative from Wizards
- Expanded to all forms of harassment and does not rely on protected classes or set examples.
- Meant to encourage safe play environment rather than punish players who cross the line (broader scope)

# Changes from previous version

- Aggressive behaviour toward objects (“Table flip”) now USC — Aggressive Behaviour (Definition: “A player acts in a threatening way towards others or their property.”)
- Previously it was TO responsibility to provide safe environment. Now that has also become Judges’ responsibility.

# Changes from previous version

- We have a wider range of activity to be vigilant for, but we also have more tools in our arsenal to combat it.

# New Penalty

- From IPG: **“Because of the confrontational nature of this infraction, judges need to end any match in progress and separate the players.”**



# New Penalty

- May be best to exercise teamwork to make sure both parties can be given full attention.
- **Match loss:** do not want harassed players to sit with their harassers for longer than necessary.

# New Penalty

- Infraction and Penalty not different if players are seated at different tables, or one is observing, or one not involved in tournament. Separate harasser from harassed in either case.

# New Penalty

- From IPG: **“If the offense occurs at the end of a match, it is acceptable for the judge to apply the penalty to the next match instead.”**
- Apply to next round to avoid “freebies”.
- Rule of thumb: If offender has already won or not yet lost, apply to same match. If already lost, apply to next match.

# New Penalty

- From IPG: **“Players who purposefully create harmful or unwelcoming situations in an event are expected to immediately correct the behavior and demonstrate remorse or be removed.”**

# New Penalty

- Remorse: Be wary of lip service and repeat offenders. Use attentiveness and empathy. Repeat offense = Upgrade.
- Possibly issue ultimatums like “If you want to continue playing today, you’ll need to convince me that this isn’t going to be a problem again,”

# New Penalty

- Player needn't agree, but if they agree to change behavior, that's acceptable.
- Exercise diplomacy and tact. Try not to get emotional at the issue. Take a few moments to cool down as well if necessary. Don't start by issuing penalty. (We'd prefer players to keep playing rather than escalating to DQ)

# New Penalty

- From IPG: **“Care should be taken not to escalate the situation if at all possible. The offender will be removed from the area to receive the penalty, and education about why the behavior is unacceptable regardless of excuse. They may need a few moments to cool down afterwards. Apologizing is encouraged, but the desire of the other individuals to not interact with their harasser must be respected ”**

# Not intentional, still harmful

- From IPG: **“If they determine that the infraction does not meet the criteria for Unsporting Conduct – Major, it is still recommended that the players be talked to to avoid future misunderstandings.”**



# Not intentional, still harmful

- May not be directed at the harassed (third party harassment)
- May not be aware that it is an issue (disability, etc.)
- Don't rely on complaints, be vigilant
- If not directed at person: may be USC - Minor

# Upgrade

- From IPG: **“The player must correct the behavior immediately. If the offense was committed with malicious intent, the player displays no remorse, or the offense is repeated at a later time, the penalty is upgraded to Disqualification and removal from the venue.”**

# Upgrade

- Note: This is not a mere DQ. Player should also be removed from venue (TO should be involved in this step). Necessary for safe environment

# Upgrade

- DQ is similar to DQ for Aggressive Behaviour: Intent was to cause harm.
- Match Loss = Education. DQ = Player unlikely to change and is not welcome at Magic events.

# Specific examples of classes

## Race and Color

- Usually target towards minorities.
- Sometimes people may use slurs even though they belong to that class. We should discourage.

# Specific examples of classes

## Religion

- May depend heavily on context

# Specific examples of classes

## National Origin

- May vary wildly from region to region

# Specific examples of classes

## Age

- Rare, but still be vigilant



# Specific examples of classes

## Disability

- Judges make reasonable accommodation
- People calling said accommodation “unfair” may come close to this infraction

# Specific examples of classes

## Orientation

- Even casual use of terms like “that’s gay” should be discouraged
- May not be visible

# Specific examples of classes

others not listed (pregnancy, body type, etc)

- If it feels like a slur or is meant to harass, step in.

# Examples from IPG

- **A player uses a racial slur against his opponent.**
- Important that you are familiar with what could be considered a slur in different regions.
- <http://www.rsdb.org/>
- When in doubt, ask a local, or use your judgement based on tone and context.

# Examples from IPG

- **A player takes inappropriate photos of another player without express permission.**
- Well-reported incident
- Taking excessive pictures of female players

# Examples from IPG

- **A player asks a spectator for a date, is denied, and continues to press the issue.**
- Regardless of gender

# Examples from IPG

- **A player purposefully obstructs another player with the intent of inducing physical contact.**
- May also verge closely to Aggressive behaviour

# Examples from IPG

- **A spectator uses social media to bully another player.**
- hard to detect, relies on social circles



# Other examples

- Using “trigger language”:
  - language that may trigger a negative response in someone, especially someone who may have experienced the issue

# Other examples

- Using “trigger language”:
  - Hard to spot at times, and may not be USC - Major.
  - Some strong examples include:  
References to rape, (child) abuse, bullying, etc.

# Other examples

- Nonverbal harassment:
  - Body language, gestures
  - Printed text, images

# Other examples

- Gender issues
- More later

# Really USC major?

- Key phrase: *“could reasonably be expected to offend”*.
- Main question: *“If an average person on the street heard this, would they be offended?”*
- Be wary of “Boys will be Boys” and similar excuses.
- Be wary of individual biases and speculation.

# Really USC major?

- Generally disruptive actions fall under USC - Minor
- From the IPG: **“A player takes action that is disruptive to the tournament or its participants.”**

# Really USC major?

- Specifically, if the action could not reasonably be seen as offensive to an individual, but still promotes language, activities, etc. that we find undesirable, it may be USC - Minor

# Really USC major?

- Example: Vulgar language, “These cards are gay”, T-shirt with “Shut up and make me a sandwich”.
- Repeated offenses or refusal to change behaviour is an upgrade to USC - Minor, not USC - Major.



# Really USC major?

- If something is disruptive and is not USC - Major or USC - Aggressive Behavior, it is USC Minor.
- To promote a safe environment, players should be spoken to to curb this behaviour, or remove potentially disruptive materials, even if no infraction is issued.

# Really USC major?

- In doubt, ask another judge, TO, player, or online (From IPG: **“Officials must investigate these matters as soon as they are brought to their attention.”**).

# Safe Environment

- From IPG: **“A safe environment is a basic expectation of any tournament attendee. Harassment undermines the safety and integrity of a tournament.”**

# Safe Environment

- Work with TO: Appropriate artwork at venue, cleanliness of bathrooms, etc
- Pay attention to card alters and playmats/sleeves/apparel that may be inappropriate.
- Post a sign regarding appropriate language and behaviour (?)

# Safe Environment

- Lead by example
  - Practice Inclusiveness and fairness
  - Treat all players with equal respect,
  - do not show favoritism based on above factors.
- For Trans\* folk: Offer help in updating DCI information, make sure TO (and, if necessary, players) are aware of correct pronouns and name.

# Promoting diversity

- Special events for certain player groups may be helpful, but must be open to all (Ladies' night, After-Church Magic,...)
- Actively promote the game and the DCI to players who might be turned away by previous behavior or expectations.
- Cliques - encourage mingling, offer casual and gateway events

# Promoting diversity

- Above all, provide a safe environment.  
Example: Most female players report that the poor behavior of other magic players is the deterrent for coming to events.  
(<http://www.hipstersofthecoast.com/2013/10/grinding-feel-women-magic/>,  
<http://www.gamingaswomen.com/posts/2013/02/why-im-so-worried-about-playing-magic-the-gathering-again/>)

# Promoting diversity

- This includes condescending behaviour (no infraction, but still should be discouraged.)
- If you're a judge that is a part of a minority, make yourself visible in social media and otherwise.
  - players in minorities feel more comfortable if someone else of that minority is there, judging or playing



# Promoting diversity

- For some, judging can be a way to come out of their shell a bit. Offer to mentor minority players who may feel hesitant about playing more (even if L1)
- Don't pressure anyone. For some, the tournament environment may just not be for them.

# Further links

- Annotated IPG:  
[http://wiki.magicjudges.org/en/w/Annotated\\_IPG/Major](http://wiki.magicjudges.org/en/w/Annotated_IPG/Major)
- <https://www.facebook.com/groups/LadyPlaneswalkersSociety/>
- Informal survey:  
<http://imgur.com/JLR0w6W>

# Further links

- <http://planeswalkersfordiversity.wordpress.com/>
- <http://rainbowvale.wordpress.com/2014/07/18/the-colors-of-magic/>
- Sean Catanese:  
[seancatanese@gmail.com](mailto:seancatanese@gmail.com)

# Addendum: A brief detour into gender issues:

- Largest group of people who are underrepresented in Magic are women.
- Be sure to use inclusive language in official announcements, especially if you are using a language that uses gendered nouns for “Player”, etc.
- A group of ever-increasing importance is be non-cisgender people.

# Addendum: A brief detour into gender issues:

- Terms: Cisgender, transgender, intersex, gender-fluid, genderqueer, agendered, non-binary.
- There is a difference between gender identity and gender expression.
- Do not use words/phrases such as: Transsexual, “Tranny”, “pre-op”, “biological”, “not a real”, “is actually a”, “wants to be a”, “it”...

# Addendum: A brief detour into gender issues:

- Do not ask questions about people's bodies. If it wouldn't be appropriate to ask a cisgendered person, it's not appropriate to ask anyone else.
- Never press issue, avoid speculating, practice acceptance.
- When in doubt, it is (usually) okay to ask for preferred name/pronouns.

# Addendum: A brief detour into gender issues:

- May easily become a magnet for USC Major.
- Misuse of language, pronouns, name, may not be USC - Major. Repeated use after the player has been educated on the issue may be.
- Above all: Treat all players with equal respect and fairness, regardless of gender.

**Thank you for listening!**

Feel free to ask any questions!

Transcript: [bit.ly/WVJRhX](https://bit.ly/WVJRhX)