

# CINCINNATI SCHOLASTIC CHESS

## Participant Handbook for 2018-19



### CSC SERIES TWELFTH SEASON

This reference document is intended for players and parents participating in the Cincinnati Scholastic Chess Series of chess tournaments. It provides detailed information about the Series specifically, about selected rules and procedures of tournament chess generally, and about the US Chess Federation. While Series participants will find here the information that they most need or want to know, this Handbook is not a comprehensive rule book. For complete and authoritative information about US Chess Federation rules, participants are referred to the *U.S. Chess Federation's Official Rules of Chess*, 6th Edition (2014) and its amendments, found online at [www.uschess.org](http://www.uschess.org).

If you have any questions or need to contact a tournament director for any reason, please call/text Alan Hodge at 513-600-9915 or send an email to [info@chesscincinnati.com](mailto:info@chesscincinnati.com).

*A note about pronouns:* Cincinnati Scholastic Chess strongly encourages girls to play chess, welcomes them enthusiastically to play in CSC tournaments, and believes that they can be as successful as boys. However, to avoid repeating the phrases *he or she*, *his or her*, and *him or her* to the point of annoyance, we have used only *he*, *his*, and *him* throughout the Handbook. While this reflects the reality that the majority of chess players are male, these pronouns are explicitly inclusive of both female and male players without distinction.

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## Changes from 2017-18

**Sections redefined:** For the last two seasons we have averaged 97 players per tournament, with the 7-12 U1000, K-6 U700 and K-6 Non-Rated sections all growing significantly beyond our target range of 20-24 players. With the intention of restoring a more optimal distribution of players, we have made two changes to our sections for 2018-19:

- *Number of rated sections increased from three to four:* We are continuing the three rated sections that we have had in past years — Championship (formerly Open), U1000 and U700 — and have added an U400 section. We expect the additional section to result in smaller and more competitive “under” sections. Moreover, the addition of a section makes more medals available for players to win.
- *Grade eliminated as a criterion for rated sections:* Grade will not be a factor for eligibility to play in any rated section. In the past players above grade 6 were not permitted to play in the U700 section. This not only contributed to the growth of the U1000 section but also required some players to play in a section where their rating would not normally put them. In 2018-19 players in all grades can play in any rated section for which they qualify by rating. (The K-6 Non-Rated section will continue to be restricted to players in grades K through 6. Unrated players above grade 6 will be required to play in a rated section, but may play in any rated section.)

**Requirements for taking notation clarified:** The redefinition of the sections made it possible also to simply and clarify the requirements for taking notation (recording the moves of a game). The new requirements are as follows: Notation is required for all players in the Championship, U1000 and U700 sections; notation is encouraged but not required for players in the U400 and K-6 Non-Rated sections.

**Onsite entry eliminated:** We are aware and very appreciative that the players and parents who support our tournaments are giving up a large part of their Saturdays to do so, and we recognize that many families go from our tournaments to other activities. It has always been important to us, therefore, to run our tournaments on schedule; but as our tournaments have grown, it has become more difficult to start on time. One major factor causing us to begin late is onsite entry, especially when people arrive only near the end of the onsite entry period. Although relatively few people enter onsite, the time it takes to process an onsite entry — completing the entry form, paying the entry fee, verifying the player information, processing the entry into our computer files, and, not infrequently, making corrections for erroneous or missing information — has been an issue that we have not been able to improve. Accordingly, we decided to eliminate onsite entry. We regret any inconvenience that this will cause to some participants, but because well over 90% of our entries are received online, we concluded that it was unfair to continue a practice that accommodates a few people at the expense of inconveniencing so many others.

## What is the Cincinnati Scholastic Chess Series?

In 2007 Cincinnati Scholastic Chess (CSC) launched the CSC Series of four-round, Swiss tournaments for players in grades K through 12. The six tournaments in the Series are rated tournaments sanctioned by the US Chess Federation; for that reason it is CSC’s responsibility to conduct them in compliance with US Chess Federation rules. There is no requirement that players play in every tournament — they are free to choose how many and which tournaments to play in. Some prizes are awarded at each tournament; others are awarded based on cumulative performance in the entire Series, taking each player’s best five scores out of the six tournaments into account.

The Series not only offers opportunities for experienced players to compete frequently in rated tournaments, but also serves as a “point of entry” for those new to the game who want to experience tournament play — or simply try it out as an activity of possible interest. Players of all skill levels are welcome. In addition to knowing how to play the game, players are required only to be familiar with the basic rules of tournament chess. These are explained succinctly in the *CSC Series Essential Information* document, which can be downloaded from our website, [www.chesscincinnati.com](http://www.chesscincinnati.com). We urge players and parents who are relatively new to tournament chess to read and understand this document (ten pages including instructions for notation).

## Tournament Dates and Locations

Tournaments for the 2018-19 season are scheduled for the following dates and locations:

October 13, 2018	<b>Princeton High School</b> 100 Viking Way, Cincinnati, OH 45246
November 3, 2018	<b>Fairfield High School</b> 8800 Holden Boulevard, Fairfield, OH 45014
December 1, 2018	<b>Lakota West High School</b> 8940 Union Centre Boulevard, West Chester, OH 45069
January 12, 2019	<b>Walnut Hills High School</b> 3250 Victory Parkway, Cincinnati, OH 45207
February 2, 2019	<b>Loveland Middle School</b> 801 South Lebanon Road, Loveland, OH 45140
March 9, 2019	<b>Sycamore High School</b> 7400 Cornell Road, Montgomery, OH 45242

Driving directions to these sites, maps and other venue-related information and updates are provided on our website, [Series Venue Information](#).

## Tournament Entry

Beginning in 2018-19, players may enter Series tournaments only in advance. There will be no onsite entry.

To enter by mail, complete and mail an entry form (one per player) to Cincinnati Scholastic Chess, 9180 Pinewood Drive, Loveland, OH 45140-8234. Mail entries early enough that they are *received* by Cincinnati Scholastic Chess no later than on the Thursday prior to the earliest of the tournaments being entered. An entry form can be downloaded from the CSC website at [CSC Series](#). For payment of the entry fee and US Chess Federation dues (if applicable), include a check payable to *Cincinnati Scholastic Chess*. The entry fees (and any dues if applicable) for multiple players can be paid with a single check.

To enter online at [CSC Series](#), complete the online entry form and pay the entry fee and US Chess Federation dues (if applicable) through PayPal using a PayPal account or a credit card. Online entries must be submitted no later than noon on the day before the earliest of the tournaments being entered. When entering online, it is necessary to complete the entry form and pay the entry fee (and dues, if applicable) individually in separate transactions for each player entered.

The entry fee is \$15 per tournament; however, the following discounts are available:

- When entering any five tournaments with one entry form, a \$10 discount applies; the total entry fee is \$65.
- When entering all six tournaments with one entry form, a \$20 discount applies; the total entry fee is \$70.

### *Entry Fee Refund Policy*

Entry fees are refundable only when a request for a refund has been received prior to the date of the tournament(s) for which the entry fee was paid. No entry fee will be refunded if the refund request is received on or after the day on which the tournament was played. To request a refund, send an email to [info@chesscincinnati.com](mailto:info@chesscincinnati.com) not later than the day before the day of the tournament for which the entry fee was paid. The amount of the refund will be the total entry fee paid for all tournaments entered less the total entry fee applicable to the number of tournaments remaining after deducting all tournaments for which a refund is requested, less \$1.00 to cover applicable processing fees. For example:

- If a player enters all six tournaments (for \$70) and then requests a refund for one tournament, the refund will be \$4.00: \$70 less \$65 (the entry fee applicable to five tournaments) less \$1.
- If a player enters five tournaments (for \$65) and then requests a refund for two tournaments, the refund will be \$19.00: \$65 less \$45 (the entry fee applicable to three tournaments) less \$1.

### *US Chess Federation Memberships*

US Chess Federation memberships may be purchased or renewed as part of entering any Series tournament(s). Players may also purchase or renew their US Chess Federation memberships directly online at [www.uschess.org](http://www.uschess.org), independently of entering a Series tournament. (See ***US Chess Federation Membership*** for details.)

### *Confirming Entries*

Entries received will be acknowledged by email (if an email address is provided on the entry form), unless they are received immediately prior to a tournament. Lists of entries received by section will be posted at each tournament for participants to check upon their arrival. Any player who does not find his name listed among the entries should check in with a tournament director. (See ***Tournament Check-In*** for more details.)

### *Changing Tournaments*

Players are asked to indicate on the entry form which tournaments they are entering. We recognize that sometimes players may want or need to transfer an entry to a different tournament. They may do so as long as there is a tournament in the current Series to which they can change. To change an entry, notify Alan Hodge by phone/text to 513-600-9915 or by email to [info@chesscincinnati.com](mailto:info@chesscincinnati.com).

## **Tournament Format**

Each tournament will be a four-round Swiss tournament. A Swiss tournament is one in which the players are divided into groups, called sections, according to certain criteria, which generally have to do with player strength. Each player plays only other players who are in his own section. Unless a player takes a bye or withdraws, he will play all four rounds regardless of his game results — these are not elimination tournaments. The time control in all sections is G/30; d5, meaning that each player has 30 minutes for the entire game and at each move there will be a five-second delay before a player's clock begins to run. Therefore, a game in which both players use nearly all their time can last approximately one hour. Each round lasts as long as necessary for the last game in the section to finish. (See ***Byes, Withdrawing from a Tournament*** and ***Chess Clocks*** for related information).

### *Tournament Sections*

Sections are defined by rating to increase parity among players. Players may play in any section described below for which they are eligible. Players in rated sections may move into another rated section provided that they satisfy the rating requirement of the section they wish to move into. Players who play in the K-6 Non-Rated section may move into a rated section upon joining the US Chess Federation; however, once a player has earned a US Chess Federation rating, he may not move back into the K-6 Non-Rated section. (See ***Ratings*** for more information.)

- **Championship (Rated):** All players in grades K through 12, rated or unrated, may play in this section. Scholastic players whose rating is 1000 or more must play in this section. Everyone who plays in this section must be a current US Chess Federation member. All players are required to take notation in this section.

*This is the section in which the strongest players play; except in very extraordinary circumstances, it is not the section for players who are playing in their first tournament.*

- **U1000 (Rated):** Only players in grades K through 12 who are rated less than 1000 or unrated may play in this section. Everyone who plays in this section must be a current US Chess Federation member. All players are required to take notation in this section.  
*We recommend that only players who have tournament experience and a rating of 600 or more play in this section.*
- **U700 (Rated):** Only players in grades K through 12 who are rated less than 700 or unrated may play in this section. Everyone who plays in this section must be a current US Chess Federation member. All players are required to take notation in this section.  
*We recommend that only players who have tournament experience and a rating of 300 or more play in this section; however, older players who are relatively new to chess might choose to play in this section even if they are rated under 300 or unrated.*
- **U400 (Rated):** Only players in grades K through 12 who are rated less than 400 or unrated may play in this section. Everyone who plays in this section must be a current US Chess Federation member. Players are not required to take notation in this section but are encouraged to do so if they know how.  
*We generally recommend that players who are new to rated chess play in this section. Players who have tournament experience and are rated under 400 also play in this section.*
- **K–6 Non-Rated:** Only unrated players who are in grades K through 6 may play in this section. An unrated player is one who has not earned a rating by playing four or more rated games. Players will not earn a rating as a result of playing in this section. Membership in the US Chess Federation is not required to play in this section. Players are not required to take notation in this section but are encouraged to do so if they know how. A player who becomes officially rated (as a consequence of playing in a rated section of any tournament) will no longer be eligible to play in this section. Unrated players in grades 7 through 12 must play in a rated section, but may play in any rated section and will earn a rating as a result.

#### *Round Times*

For all sections round 1 begins at 9:00 am. The next round in each section will begin as soon as possible (usually about ten minutes) after the previous round ends. The tournament directors will announce when pairings have been posted for the next round. Players are expected to be at their boards within a few minutes after new pairings are announced. Play in the Championship section typically ends no later than approximately 1:30 pm. Other sections routinely finish earlier because rounds are played more quickly than in the Championship section. Players who need to leave before the tournament ends may take a bye for a later round or withdraw. (See **Byes** and **Withdrawing from a Tournament** for more details.)

#### *Playing in Different Sections*

Players have the option of playing in different sections in different tournaments provided always that they are eligible for the section they want to play in. Players may choose to play in their “natural” section (the section designated for their rating) or to “play up” (meaning to play in any section with a higher rating ceiling than their natural section). On their entry form players must indicate one section to play in but may decide at any later time to play in a different section in a future tournament. Players who want to change sections must so notify Alan Hodge *before the tournament date* by email to [info@chesscincinnati.com](mailto:info@chesscincinnati.com), or by phone/text to 513-600-9915. Players may also change sections onsite by notifying the tournament director by 8:45 am of which section they want to move into. Once pairings are posted for round 1, players may not change sections during that tournament. All the points that a player scores in any rated section will count toward Series trophies regardless of which section they are scored in.

A player may also move from the K-6 Non-Rated section to a rated section, provided that he or she meets the USCF membership requirement for the rated section. However, once a player becomes officially rated, he or she may not move back to the K-6 Non-Rated section. Players who move from the K-6 Non-Rated section and to a rated section may, under certain circumstances, apply their scores from not more than two non-rated tournaments toward Series class trophies, but not to the Cincinnati Scholastic Series Championship trophy. (See **Points** and **Prizes** for further information.)

## Byes

In tournament chess a bye indicates that a player will not (or did not) play the particular round for which the bye was taken. A player may score a full point, one-half point or zero for a bye as explained below.

**Full-point bye:** When a player is paired out of a round, he is given a full-point bye for that round, which for purposes of tournament scoring is equivalent to having played a game and won it. “Paired out” means that because the number of players to be paired in a section is odd, one player is necessarily left without an opponent. This is not an optional bye for the player because the player has no choice about whether he gets paired out. Accordingly he receives one point for his tournament score and one point for a game played, even though he didn’t actually play a game. Being paired out has no impact on the calculation of the player’s rating. No player may be paired out more than once in any tournament. (See *Points* for further details.)

**Half-point bye:** When a player chooses not to play a particular round, he can elect to take a half-point bye for that round. For example, a player can request a bye for round 1 if he knows that he will not arrive at the tournament by 8:45 am, or for round 4 if he needs to leave the tournament before it is over, or even for round 2 or 3 if he needs or wants to miss one of the middle rounds for some reason. Moreover, a player who arrives late for a tournament and is consequently not paired for round 1 will be given a half-point bye for round 1 even if he did not request one in advance. For purposes of tournament scoring, the player will receive one-half point for his tournament score and one-half point for a game played. (See *Late Arrivals* under *Tournament Check-In*.)

For the 2018-19 season, players may take one half-point bye in each tournament, subject to the following:

- A player must request a bye before pairings are posted for the round in which he wants the bye. A player can request (or change) a bye:
  - (1) on the entry form,
  - (2) by notifying CSC prior to the tournament (by email to [info@chesscincinnati.com](mailto:info@chesscincinnati.com) or by phone/text to Alan Hodge at 513-600-9915),
  - (3) by notifying a tournament director onsite before or during the tournament, provided that the bye is requested before pairings are posted for the bye round.
- A player who has requested a half-point bye will not be paired out in that tournament unless there is no better alternative pairing.
- A player who was paired out in any round may not take a half-point bye for any later round.

**Zero-point bye:** If a player has already taken a full-point or half-point bye, and elects to take an additional bye, each additional bye taken will be a zero-point bye. In the case of a zero-point bye, for purposes of tournament scoring the player will receive no point (zero) for his tournament score and no point (zero) for a game played. (See *Points* for further details.)

## Tournament Check-In

On the day of the tournament, lists of the players who are entered will be posted near where participants enter the venue. Players are listed alphabetically in the section indicated on their entry form unless we received instructions otherwise from a player after receiving his entry form or needed to move a player due to his rating. When arriving at a tournament, players should check off their names to indicate that they are present. Any player who is not listed, or is listed in a section other than the one he wants to play in, should see the tournament director immediately. (See *Tournament Format* for more information.)

Any player who wants to change sections, request a bye, or correct any information relating to his entry must see the tournament director before 8:45 am.

### *Late Arrivals*

Players are expected to check off their names on the entry lists no later than 8:45 am. These lists will be taken down at 8:45, and round 1 pairings will be prepared based on who is checked in. Players who neglect to check off their name upon arrival, or who arrive after 8:45 am, should not expect to be paired in round 1; however, they should make the tournament director aware that they are present as soon as they arrive because they *may* be paired in round 1 at the tournament director's discretion. Additional details of this policy are as follows:

- The tournament director will preferentially pair *unrated players* so that they play four games in the tournament because a player must play four rated games to earn a rating. (See **Ratings** for more information.)
- The tournament director will preferentially pair a late-arriving player into a section where another player has been paired out. When there are two or more late-arriving players for such a section, the tournament director may, at his sole discretion, choose which late-arriving player to pair. The late-arriving player in this situation might suffer a time penalty if round 1 was started before he was paired.
- With respect to any late-arriving player who is not paired against a paired-out player, the tournament director may, at his sole discretion, either pair him against another late-arriving player in the same section, if one is available (possibly reducing the time control for their game by the time elapsed since the start of round 1, split equally between the two players), or not pair him at all until round 2, in which case he will receive a half-point bye for round 1. (See **Byes** and **Points** for related information.)
- A player who did not request a bye in advance and arrives after 9:30 am will be given a zero-point bye for round 1. This means that he will have a game score of zero and a playing score of zero for round 1.
- Late-arriving players will be paired in all remaining rounds of the tournament unless they are paired out of a round, take an optional bye, or withdraw.
- There will be no refund of entry fees, partial or otherwise, for any rounds missed due to late arrival.

## What to Do When the Game is Over

When two players finish their game, they should pause the clock and raise their hands. This will signal the tournament director to come and verify the game result. The players should leave the final position as it is — that is, don't re-set the board or otherwise move any of the pieces — until the tournament director has verified the result. This is especially important when a player intends to claim a win on time. (See **Player Claims** for more information.)

After the tournament director verifies the result of the game:

- Players are asked to set the pieces up in their correct starting position so that the board is ready for a new game. After round 4 they do this to make sure that all the pieces are there, and then put the pieces into a bag that the tournament director provides.
- When the players have re-set the board or bagged the pieces, they must leave the tournament room promptly and *record the result of their game on the pair chart*. To record a game's outcome, a player enters a "1" to the left of the name of the winner and a "0" to the left of name of the loser. If the game is a draw, a player enters "1/2" beside each name. Both players are responsible for making sure that the result of their game is correctly recorded on the pair chart. (See **Pairings** and **Forfeits** for more information.)
- Except in the Championship section, players are required to stay out of the tournament rooms until pairings for the next round are announced. Players in the Championship section may watch other games in progress in their section, even after they have concluded their own games, provided that they conduct themselves properly. (See **Watching Games in Progress** and **Sportsmanship** for related information.)

## Withdrawing from a Tournament

To withdraw from a tournament means to choose not to play any remaining rounds. You may withdraw from the tournament at any time; however, ***you must notify a tournament director that you are withdrawing before pairings are done for the next round.*** A player who fails to so notify a tournament director will be paired in the next round as though he were still in the tournament. This causes pairing problems, is unfair to the person paired against that player (because he will end up without an opponent and lose the opportunity to play a game in that round), and makes the player guilty of a forfeit. Even if you are upset or had a bad day, please don't leave without telling us. *Withdrawing without notice is bad for everyone — please don't do it!*

## Forfeits

A player who fails to show up for a game for which he has been paired will be forfeited. In Series tournaments, a game is not officially a forfeit until the player's time expires or, if no clock is being used, until 30 minutes have elapsed since the tournament director started the round.

A player who abandons a game in progress is likewise forfeited. A player abandons a game if he (1) begins the game by making at least one move, (2) leaves the board and does not return for the duration of the round, and (3) did not resign or accept a draw offer before leaving the board.

When a forfeit occurs, the score should be marked on the pair chart as "F" for the player who forfeited and as "X" for that player's opponent. For the player who forfeited ("F"), a forfeit counts as zero for purposes of both the game score and the playing score. For the opponent ("X"), a forfeit win counts as 1 point for the game score and as 1 point for the playing score, but will not be included in the calculation of the player's new rating. (See ***Points*** for more information.)

The tournament directors will withdraw any player who forfeits a game, meaning that he will not be paired in any remaining rounds of that tournament. Moreover, the tournament directors, at their sole discretion, may prohibit the player who has forfeited from participating in future CSC tournaments. Entry fees will not be refunded for any player who is withdrawn due to forfeiting.

## Points

Series class trophies and the Cincinnati Scholastic Chess Series Champion trophy (described further under ***Prizes*** below) are awarded based on the number of points a player accumulates during the Series. A player scores two types of points in Series tournaments, one representing his "game score" and the other representing his "playing score."

- A "game score" indicates a player's actual game results. It is the sum of all wins, draws and byes that the player had in the tournament. Each win (including any forfeit win) counts as 1, each draw counts as  $\frac{1}{2}$ , and each loss counts as zero. A bye counts as 1 point when it results from a player being paired out and as either a half-point or zero if it is an elective bye or results from a late arrival. (See ***Pairings*** for an explanation of getting paired out; see also ***Byes*** for additional information.)
- A "playing score" refers to points a player scores simply for playing a game, regardless of the game's outcome. A player scores one point for each game played, each forfeit win, and for each full-point bye (resulting from getting paired out), and a half-point for each half-point bye. A player scores zero for a zero-point bye and for a forfeit loss.

To illustrate: A player who played all four rounds of a tournament and won all four games scores 8.0 points (a game score of 4 plus a playing score of 4); a player who played all four rounds of a tournament and lost all four games scores 4.0 points (a game score of 0 plus a playing score of 4). A player who was paired out of one round and had a draw and two losses in the other three rounds, scores 5.5 points (a game score of 1.5 plus a playing score of 4). A player who took a half-point bye and had two wins and a draw in the other three rounds, scores 6.5 points (a game score of 3.0 plus a playing score of 3.5).

## Prizes

The following prizes are awarded for CSC Series tournaments:

- *Individual Tournament Medals*: Medal winners are determined based only on their *game score* (game results). At each tournament and in each section, including the K-6 Non-Rated section, place medals are awarded to those who finish in first through fifth place. Any player scoring 3.0 but not finishing among the top five places wins an honorable mention medal. Calculated tie-breaks will be used to determine medal winners among players with the same score. (See *Breaking Ties* for more information.)
- *Series class trophies* are awarded in rated sections only, based on players' best five scores during the Series, counting both game and playing scores. A maximum of 40 points will count for purposes of Series class trophies. A Series class trophy will be awarded to each player (other than the Cincinnati Scholastic Chess Series Champion) who scores a designated number of points as indicated below:
  - Gold-class trophy: 34.0 points or more
  - Silver-class trophy: 31.0 to 33.5 points
  - Bronze-class trophy: 26 to 30.5 points
  - Honorable mention trophy: 20.5 to 25.5 points

Class trophies are not awarded in the K-6 Non-Rated section, although players who move from the K-6 Non-Rated section to a rated section will be eligible for class trophies. Some of the points scored by such players in the K-6 Non-Rated section might count for trophy purposes as explained below.

- The *Ron Giffin Trophy* will be awarded to the player scoring the most points for the series exclusively in the Championship section, based on players' best five scores during the Series, counting both game and playing scores. This player will be recognized as the Cincinnati Scholastic Chess Series Champion. The maximum possible score for the Ron Giffin Trophy is 40 points. In the event that two or more players tie, the champion will be determined as follows:
  - If all the tied players played in the March tournament, the champion will be the player with the best game score (game results) in the March tournament. If two or more players tie with the highest game score, the tie-breaks specified under *Breaking Ties* will determine the champion.
  - If not all the tied players played in the March tournament, then the highest scoring player among those tied players who played in the March tournament will be determined as prescribed in the preceding paragraph. This player will then be compared with the tied player(s) who did not play in the March tournament on the basis of their game scores in the most recent tournament in which any two or more of the tied players played. If, after comparing game results, any players are still tied, the tie-breaks specified under *Breaking Ties* will be applied to the results of the earlier tournament to determine the champion. This step will be repeated as necessary until the highest scoring player who played in the March has been compared with all other tied players who did not play in March. If any players remain tied after the application of these tie-breaks, the champion will be the player who played in the March tournament.

### *Applicability toward Class Trophies of Points Scored in the K-6 Non-Rated Section*

A player who begins the Series playing in the K-6 Non-Rated section and later moves to a rated section may count, for purposes of class trophies, the scores from no more than two tournaments in which he played in the K-6 Non-Rated section. Points scored in a rated section will be counted preferentially before any points scored in the K-6 Non-Rated section. The following examples illustrate when scores from the K-6 Non-Rated section will be counted:

- Player A plays the first two tournaments in the K-6 Non-Rated section and then plays three tournaments in the U400 section. He may count the scores of all his tournaments toward a Series class trophy.
- Player B plays the first two tournaments in the K-6 Non-Rated section and four tournaments in the U700 and U1000 sections. He may count only the higher score from his two non-rated tournaments and the four scores from his rated tournaments toward a Series class trophy.

- Player C plays three tournaments in the K-6 Non-Rated section and three tournaments in the U1000 section. He may count only the two highest scores from his non-rated tournaments and the three scores from his rated tournaments toward a Series class trophy.
- Player D plays three tournaments in the K-6 Non-Rated section and two tournaments in the U700 section. He may count only the two highest scores from his non-rated tournaments and the two scores from his rated tournaments toward a Series class trophy — giving him a total score based on only four tournaments.
- Player E plays the first tournament in the K-6 Non-Rated section and five tournaments in the U700 and U1000 sections. His five rated tournaments will count toward a Series class trophy. He may not count the points scored in the K-6 Non-Rated section even if that score is higher than the score from one of his rated tournaments.
- Player F plays two tournaments in the K-6 Non-Rated section and four tournaments in the Championship section. He may count only the higher score from his two non-rated tournaments and the four scores in the Championship section toward a Series class trophy. He may count only the four scores in the Championship section toward the Cincinnati Scholastic Chess Series Champion trophy.

### *Trophy Standings*

Tournament results and cumulative point totals will be posted throughout the year both at the Series tournaments and on our website at [CSC Series](#). Players need not play in every tournament to be eligible for a trophy, but players who play in fewer than five tournaments will be at a disadvantage in competing for Series trophies.

## Ratings

A rating is a numerical measure of a player's playing strength. A player earns a rating by playing in a section of a tournament for which the game results are reported to the US Chess Federation. Based on the results reported, the US Chess Federation calculates one or more of several different ratings depending on the form of play (over-the-board, correspondence, Internet) and time control (e.g., blitz, quick, regular). It is not necessary that a player already have a rating in order to play in rated tournaments — indeed, it is necessary to play in at least one tournament as an unrated player because that is the only way to get a rating to begin with.

Unrated players will earn a provisional rating as soon as they have played four rated games, the results of which have been reported to the US Chess Federation. A rating is indicated as provisional in various ways, including *1150 (P15)*, *1150P15* and *1150/15*, where *P*, if it occurs, stands for *provisional*, and the number after the *P* or / indicates the number of games on which the rating is based.<sup>1</sup>

A player's rating is provisional for a player's first 25 rated games. When the rating is no longer provisional, the number of games is not shown. For example, *1150/15* indicates a provisional rating of 1150 based on 15 rated games, whereas *1150* by itself indicates a regular (not provisional) rating that is based on 26 or more games. A provisional rating typically fluctuates greatly as new results are processed. Established ratings will also fluctuate, but changes will usually be smaller than for provisionally rated players.

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<sup>1</sup> The threshold for earning a provisional rating is four games. Since most tournaments are four or more rounds, a player can usually earn an official rating after playing in only one tournament. (This is the rationale for not pairing out an unrated player in a four-round tournament.) However, situations do arise where a player plays in more than one tournament before playing his fourth rated game. Therefore, you might see a player listed with a rating such as *150/2*. While this rating is calculated just like any other rating, it is not recognized as an official rating because it is based on fewer than four games. Any player who has played only one, two or three rated games will officially be unrated until the result of his fourth rated game is processed, and such players are eligible to play in a non-rated section of a tournament. To complicate matters further, tournament organizers are free to set other criteria for their non-rated sections. For example, a tournament organizer may decide that anyone who has played fewer than ten rated games is eligible to play in a non-rated section of that tournament. Players who are interested in playing in a non-rated section must pay close attention to the requirements published for any particular tournament they are considering. The practice of Cincinnati Scholastic Chess is that only players who are unrated according to the US Chess Federation definition (i.e., a player who has played fewer than four rated games) may play in the CSC Series non-rated section.

The US Chess Federation has defined class designations based on rating, and players are often referred to by these designations according to what their rating is; for example, as a “Class C” player or an “Expert” player, and so forth. These designations mean something quite specific for the chess community. A “Master” player is someone who has objectively achieved and maintains a rating of 2200 or more, not anyone who is merely perceived subjectively to play the game really well. A player rated 2150 plays the game really, really well but is “only” an Expert, not a Master; and it is inaccurate to refer to such a player as a “master.” The US Chess Federation rating classes are shown in the following table:

<i>Rating</i>	<i>Class</i>		<i>Rating</i>	<i>Class</i>
2400 and above	Senior Master <sup>2</sup>		1000–1199	Class E
2200–2399	Master		800–999	Class F
2000–2199	Expert		600–799	Class G
1800–1999	Class A		400–599	Class H
1600–1799	Class B		200–399	Class I
1400–1599	Class C		100*–199	Class J
1200–1399	Class D		<i>*A rating cannot be lower than 100.</i>	

### *Rating Requirements for Series Tournaments*

Players do not need to have a rating to play in a Series tournament. Both rated and unrated players may play in a rated section, while only unrated players (those who have played fewer than four rated games) may play in the K-6 Non-Rated section. Everyone who plays in a rated section, whether or not he already has a rating, must be a current member of the US Chess Federation. Players in the K-6 Non-Rated section are not required to be US Chess Federation members, but unrated players who are US Chess Federation members are welcome play in the K-6 Non-Rated section. Players will not earn a rating as a result of playing in the K-6 Non-Rated section. See ***US Chess Federation Membership*** for more information about membership.

### *Beginning Rating for Purposes of a Tournament*

Because a player’s rating determines both what section(s) the player is eligible to play in and, in combination with other factors, against whom the player will be paired, and because a player’s rating will change virtually every time he plays in a rated tournament, it is important to understand what rating is used as the player’s beginning rating for a tournament. There are two ratings of record published by the US Chess Federation: a player’s *official rating* and the player’s *most recent rating*. (See ***Tournament Format*** and ***Pairings*** for related information.)

- The US Chess Federation publishes every month a new “rating supplement” and “rating database” that lists the *official ratings* for players. Because of the time needed to prepare and publish each new supplement or database, the data cut-off is the third Wednesday of each month for the supplement/database to be effective as of the first day of the following month. For example, for the July 1, 2018 supplement/database, no results submitted after June 20, 2018 are included in the rating calculations.
- The US Chess Federation calculates new ratings within a day of receiving tournament results, which are typically submitted within a day or two of the tournament’s conclusion. As soon as they are calculated, these new ratings are published in the wall chart for the tournament and are players’ *most recent rating*.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> The highest rank in chess (other than World Champion) is Grandmaster. The Grandmaster (GM) title is conferred on the basis not only of rating but also of specified results achieved in particular, qualifying tournaments. These results are called “norms.” Once a player has attained a specified rating (currently 2500) and achieved the requisite number of norms (or satisfied certain alternative criteria), the international governing body of chess, the *Fédération Internationale des Échecs* (FIDE) officially confers the Grandmaster title. Lesser titles, including FIDE Master (FM), International Master (IM), and National Master (NM) are similarly conferred based on their own specific criteria.

<sup>3</sup> To see a player’s most recent ratings, go to [www.uschess.org](http://www.uschess.org) and use the Player Lookup function to find the player’s record, click on the player’s name, and then look on the Tournament History (“Tnmt. Hst”) tab. All the tournaments that the player has played in (since late 1991) are listed in order from the most recent (listed first) to oldest, along with the player’s most recent (and last previous) Regular, Quick and Blitz ratings. Clicking on any tournament will open its US Chess Federation wall chart.

For players who have no new results reported between the data cut-off and the date of the associated supplement/database, the two ratings will be identical. But for players who had new results reported during this period, the *most recent rating* will be more current than the *official rating* and normally different from it.<sup>4</sup>

For every Series tournament the beginning rating used for each player will be the player’s *official rating* except in the case of players in a rated section who are officially unrated, in which case the player’s most recent rating (if there is one) will be used. Because of rating changes, it is sometimes necessary to move a player into a higher rated section and sometimes possible for a player to move into a lower rated section. A player who is officially unrated may play in the K-6 Non-Rated section even if he earned a rating after the data cut-off date for the current monthly rating supplement.

## US Chess Federation Membership

The US Chess Federation is the national organization governing chess in the United States and is the US member of the *Fédération Internationale des Échecs* (FIDE, the International Chess Federation), the organization that governs chess globally. In addition to determining and publishing the rules of tournament chess in the US, the US Chess Federation assigns every member a unique identification number and calculates a rating for the member based on his performance in rated tournaments and matches. Because the Series tournaments are rated tournaments, membership in the US Chess Federation is required for participation in any rated section of a Series tournament.

The US Chess Federation offers a variety of membership options for scholastic players, which include either a subscription or online access to the magazines *Chess Life* or *Chess Life for Kids*. The following information is current as of May 2018.

Membership Type	1 Year	2 Years	Magazine Benefit
<b>Premium Young Adult</b> Must be 25 years old or under at expiration of membership term	\$35	\$65	Includes 12 issues per year of <i>Chess Life</i>
<b>Regular Young Adult</b> Must be 25 years old or under at expiration of membership term	\$26	\$48	Includes online access to <i>Chess Life</i>
<b>Premium Youth</b> Must be 16 years old or under at expiration of membership term	\$30	\$55	Includes 6 issues per year of <i>Chess Life</i>
<b>Regular Youth</b> Must be 16 years old or under at expiration of membership term	\$22	\$40	Includes online access to <i>Chess Life</i>
<b>Premium Scholastic</b> Must be 13 years old or under at expiration of membership term	\$25	\$45	Includes 6 issues per year of <i>Chess Life for Kids</i>
<b>Regular Scholastic</b> Must be 13 years old or under at expiration of membership term	\$17	\$30	Includes online access to <i>Chess Life for Kids</i>

US Chess Federation memberships may be purchased or renewed directly online at [www.uschess.org](http://www.uschess.org) (“Join/Renew” in the top navigator bar) or through CSC as part of entering any Series tournament.

## Chess Clocks

A chess clock is used to enforce the time control for a game. A time control is the amount of time that each player has to play the either the entire game or a specified number of moves. A chess clock is actually two clocks in one device, one clock for each player. While it is one player’s move, his chess clock runs while his opponent’s clock does not. After moving a piece on the board, a player completes each move by pressing his clock button, which simultaneously stops his clock and starts his opponent’s clock. If time expires for one player before the game is otherwise decided, and if the other player still has time remaining on his clock, the

<sup>4</sup> For most players, it is possible but very unlikely that a player’s rating will not change when new tournament results are submitted.

player with time remaining may claim a win (or draw<sup>5</sup>) on time. When time expires for a player, it is said that his “flag fell”; the expiration of a player’s time is called “flagfall.”

There are different types and styles of chess clocks. Flagfall is indicated variously by the physical drop of an indicator (the “flag”) or by the time display changing to “0:00” with or without an accompanying light signal, flashing signal, or similar electronic indicator. Some clocks also have an optional audible signal, such as a beep, but if such a clock is used in tournament chess, this option should be set to “silent” mode so that no audible signal is given at flagfall. Every clock has a way to stop both clocks temporarily (by pushing a “pause” button or switch), which is permissible only when a player wants to ask a tournament director a question or make a claim relating to the game. It is important that every player understand how to pause the clock in a Series tournament. Anyone who is not familiar with the clocks we use should ask his opponent or a tournament director before his game begins. (See *Player Claims* for more information.)

For Series tournaments, the time control in all sections for all rounds is game in 30 minutes with a five-second delay (written in chess “code” as G/30; d5), meaning that each player has 30 minutes for the entire game and at each move there is a delay of five seconds before a clock resumes running. If a player makes his move and presses his clock within five seconds, he spends none of his remaining clock time.

Players in all rated sections must use a clock; players in the K-6 Non-Rated section must use clocks, beginning with the top board, to the extent that clocks are available. Players do not have the option, either individually or jointly with their opponent, to choose not to use a clock when a clock is available for them to use. In Series tournaments, CSC provides clocks (as well as boards, pieces and scoresheets) for all players.

If a player is paired out in round 1, the tournament director will set him up at a board with a clock and direct him to start the opponent’s clock when the tournament director starts the round. If an opponent is found for the player from among late-arriving players, the late arriving player will be paired with the paired-out player and will play the game with whatever time remains on the clock, incurring the penalty of whatever time elapsed since the start of the round.

#### *Clock-Related Rules*

Some rules that apply specifically to the use of clocks are stated below. References are to the rule numbers in the *U.S. Chess Federation Official Rules of Chess, 6th Edition, 2014*.

- The player who has the black pieces has the choice of which side of the board the clock is placed on (16L, 39A1).
- Each player must operate the clock with the same hand that he uses to move his piece (16C1). This does not mean that a player must make every move with the same hand, but rather that on each move of the game, he must operate the clock with whichever hand he used to move a piece on that move.
- After pressing the clock to complete a move, a player must remove his hand entirely from the clock until pressing it again to complete the next move. That is, a player may not keep a hand on or in contact with the clock in between moves (16C).
- Only the two players involved in the game may call flagfall. For anyone else to bring attention to the fact that a player’s flag has fallen is both a violation of US Chess Federation rules and unsportsmanlike interference in the game. Anyone who does this is subject to expulsion from the tournament and forfeiture of all games played, or to a lesser penalty, at the sole discretion of the tournament director (13C1).
- If time expires for both players before either player calls flagfall, then the game is a draw, regardless of the position on the board, unless the last move played is checkmate. (14G, 14G1, 14G2, 16T).

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<sup>5</sup> In order to claim a win on time, a player must have “mating material” remaining on the board, meaning that with the pieces the player has left in play, he could checkmate the opponent if the opponent has only a king and if the game continued. For further details, see *Ways to Draw* or Rule 14E, Insufficient material to win on time in *U.S. Chess Federation Official Rules of Chess, 6th Edition, 2014*.

- The flag is considered fallen when either player points this out (16E). A checkmate or stalemate played on the board before flagfall is *called* determines the result of the game (as a win or draw respectively), even if the flag of the player who effected the checkmate or stalemate had actually fallen (but not been called) before the checkmating or stalemating move was made (13A1, 13A2, 13A3, 14A1, 14A2, 14A3).

## Touch-Move

“Touch-move” refers to US Chess Federation Rule 10, which is a rule applicable to chess when played in rated tournaments. The touch-move rule is in effect for all Series games. In simple terms, this rules states:

- If you deliberately touch one of your own pieces, you must move that piece if you legally can.
- If you deliberately touch one of your opponent’s pieces, you must capture that piece if you legally can.
- If you legally move one of your pieces to a square and release it (that is, let go of it so that physical contact between your hand and the piece is broken), it must remain on that square whether or not that is the square to which you intended to move it.
- If you move a piece that you cannot legally move, you must put that piece back on the square where it was before you moved it and make a legal move.

The touch-move rule does not apply to any piece touched accidentally or to any piece off the board, i.e., any piece that has been captured, removed from the board, and not yet restored to the board through pawn promotion.

### *Touch-Move and Castling*

The correct way to castle is to move the king first and then the rook. When a player castles by moving the rook first, and it turns out that castling is not legal, the player is obligated to move his rook if he legally can. If he has no legal move with the rook, he is free to make any legal move.

### *Touch-Move and Pawn Promotion*

When promoting a pawn, a player selects a piece (queen, rook, knight or bishop) that is not on the board to replace his pawn. A player may pick up one off-the-board piece, then change his mind and select a different piece. This does not violate the touch-move rule, and a player can change his selection of a replacement piece until he places a piece in contact with the promotion square on the board. At that point, the player can no longer change his mind (even if he has not yet released the piece) and the selected piece takes the place of the pawn.

*Note:* When choosing a piece to replace his pawn, a player is not limited to pieces that have been captured. For example, a player who wants to promote his pawn to a rook can do so even when he has two rooks already on the board. The tournament director will provide the desired piece if it is not immediately available to the player among nearby off-the-board pieces.

### *Touch-Move and Adjusting a Piece*

To adjust a piece means to reposition it slightly so as to make it clear which square it occupies. The touch-move rule also does not apply to adjusting a piece as long as a player adjusts the piece properly. Adjusting a piece is proper if: (1) the piece was placed in contact with two or more squares, (2) a player adjusts it when his own clock is running, and (3) the player announces his intention to adjust a piece before doing so by saying “adjust” audibly to the opponent. If a player adjusts any piece without first saying “adjust,” the touch-move rule applies.

It is not proper to adjust a piece for any reason other than to clarify its location — for example, it is inappropriate to adjust a piece simply to change its orientation, such as which way a knight is “facing,” when there is no question as to which square it occupies). It is best to adjust only one’s own pieces. If a player

moves a piece in such a way that it is unclear to which square he intended to move it and then presses his clock button, the opponent has the right to restart the player's clock and ask him to adjust the piece.

## Player Claims

In certain situations, such as the expiration of a player's time or the violation of a rule, a player can make a claim to the tournament director for the imposition of a penalty or the determination of the game's result. Examples are:

- Claiming a win on time when the opponent's time has expired
- Claiming that the opponent made a move in violation of the touch-move rule
- Claiming that the opponent made an illegal move, such as failing to get out of check or castling illegally
- Claiming a draw on the basis of repetition of position or the 50-move rule (See *Ways to Draw* for details.)
- Claiming any activity that is contrary to the rules, such as leaving one's hand on the clock in between moves, engaging in any distracting or unsportsmanlike behavior, or using an electronic scoresheet in an unpermitted manner

The correct way to make a claim is to pause the clock, raise one's hand to get the tournament director's attention, and explain the situation to the tournament director when he arrives at your board. The tournament director will then decide whether to uphold or deny the claim. **If a player is uncertain whether he has grounds for a claim, or simply has a question, it is critical that he bring the matter to a tournament director's attention immediately when the situation arises in his game!** We tournament directors too often hear about a rule violation or similar situation only after the game is over — when it is too late to investigate or to take any corrective action. *If you are not sure about a situation, raise a hand and ask the tournament director right away!*

Claims can be made only by one of the two players engaged in a particular game. No other person, except a tournament director in certain circumstances, may make any claim on behalf of a player or any comment that such a claim is possible. Any person who brings attention to the possibility of a claim in any game in which he or she is not a player is subject to penalties at the discretion of the tournament director, which may include forfeiture of games and ejection from the tournament. (See *Watching Games in Progress* and *Sportsmanship* for related information.)

The usual penalty when a player violates a rule (such as making an illegal move) is to increase the opponent's remaining time by two minutes; however, the tournament director in many cases has the authority to impose a different penalty, or no penalty, at his discretion.

## Illegal Moves

When an illegal move is played, such as when a player makes a move that does not get him out of check, the opponent has the right to claim an illegal move, and may choose to make a claim or not. If the opponent chooses to make a claim, he must call a tournament director as explained under *Player Claims* above. If the opponent chooses not to make a claim, he should, without making a move, immediately restart the player's clock and point out the illegal move. Whether or not the opponent makes a claim, the player must "take back" the illegal move and make a legal move.

When both players fail to recognize the illegal move and continue to make moves that disregard it, any moves played stand until one player or the other recognizes the illegal move, in which case the player should pause the clock and raise a hand to get a tournament director's attention. One of the following resolutions will be applied:

- If fewer than ten moves<sup>6</sup> have been played since the illegal move occurred, and if the position can be restored to the point immediately before the illegal move was played, the position will be so restored and the game will be re-played from that point, applying the touch-move rule. The restoration of the position can be based on the game records of one or both players, or by agreement between the players in the absence of a suitable game record. No time will be restored to either player’s clock in this situation.
- If (a) fewer than ten moves have been played since the illegal move occurred but the position cannot be restored to the point immediately before the illegal move was played, or (b) it is not known how many moves have been played since the illegal move occurred, or (c) it is known that ten or more moves have been played since the illegal move occurred, the illegal move will stand and the game will continue from its current position subject to the following:
  - If the player who is on the move is in check, the game will continue from its current position with the player on the move getting out of check immediately.
  - If the player who is on the move is giving check, then the opponent will take back his last move, and the game will continue from that position with the opponent now on the move. The touch-move rule applies.

## Announcing Check

A player is not required to announce “check” when he checks his opponent, although it is a common practice to do so, especially among younger players. Every player is responsible for recognizing when he is in check.

## Taking Notation (Recording the moves of a game)

US Chess Federation Rule 15A stipulates that “each player is required to record the game (both the player’s and the opponent’s moves), move after move, as clearly and legibly as possible . . .” Recording the moves of a game is also called *taking notation* or *notating*. The record of a game’s moves is called a *scoresheet* or a *game score*.

In Series tournaments, players in the Championship, U1000 and U700 sections *are required* to take notation, but players in the U400 and K-6 Non-Rated sections *are not required* to take notation. When someone begins playing in tournaments, he encounters several features that are likely to be new and unfamiliar, including the pair chart, the clock, not being able to take moves back, and adhering to numerous other rules that pertain to a tournament. We concluded that those features are enough for novice players to be concerned about, and therefore our policy is to excuse players in the U400 and K-6 Non-Rated sections from the requirement to take notation. (Those who know, or are just learning, how to take notation are encouraged to do so, but only if they can do this without impairing their effort to play the game to the best of their ability. If taking notation takes so much time that it puts them into time trouble, or is such a distraction that they lose focus on what is happening on the board, then they should not notate.)

Several rules apply to taking notation, including these:

- *US Chess Federation Rule 15A (Variation I)*: A player using a paper scoresheet may either make a move on the board before recording it or record a move before making it on the board.
- *US Chess Federation Rule 15A*: A player using an electronic scoresheet is required to make a move on the board before recording it. (See ***Electronic Scoresheets*** for more information.)
- *US Chess Federation Rule 15A*: A player’s scoresheet must be visible to the tournament director and to the player’s opponent at all times during a game.

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<sup>6</sup> A complete move is one move by each player; thus “ten moves” means that white moved ten times and black moved ten times. Each player moving five times does not equate to ten moves.

- *US Chess Federation Rule 15B*: If *either* player has five minutes or less of time remaining, *both* players are excused from the requirement to take notation. Either player may continue to take notation if he so chooses.
- *US Chess Federation Rule 15D*: Sometimes a player will want to use his opponent's scoresheet to correct his own scoresheet. US Chess Federation rules allow this, provided that both players have at least five minutes of time remaining. The US Chess Federation rule does not require the opponent to comply, but it is unsportsmanlike for a player to refuse to allow his opponent to examine a scoresheet for this purpose. A player is permitted to make corrections to his scoresheet only when it is his move, and while doing so the player's clock will continue to run (i.e., a player is not permitted to pause the clock when correcting his scoresheet). If any issue arises in connection with correcting a scoresheet, including an opponent's refusal to make his scoresheet available, a player should request the assistance of a tournament director; in this case it is permitted to pause the clock until the issue has been resolved.
- *US Chess Federation Rule 20C*: Players are prohibited from writing anything on their scoresheets except the moves, draw offers, clock times, and the header information normally found on a scoresheet.

A player who is unable to take notation for any reason must make the tournament director aware of this. Depending on the particular circumstances of the situation, the tournament director can take different actions at his discretion, including finding another person to take notation for the player or deducting a number of minutes from the player's time. A player who is required to take notation and refuses to do so will be reminded of the requirement and is also subject to a penalty, including the deduction of five minutes or one-half of his remaining time, whichever is less, from his time for the game, forfeit of the game, or withdrawal from the tournament. A player may make a claim if his opponent is not taking notation, but a tournament director can intervene even if no claim is made.

For those who have the option, not taking notation has certain disadvantages. A player who does not notate, or stops notating, his game forfeits the right to make any claim that is dependent on having a "reasonably complete" scoresheet (even if his opponent has a scoresheet). Examples of such a claim include a draw by repetition of position (unless a forced perpetual check can be demonstrated) or by the 50-move rule, and a claim of an illegal move when several moves have been played after the alleged illegal move. A scoresheet may lack up to three move pairs and still qualify as reasonably complete for the purpose of demonstrating a claim provided that the moves necessary to establish the claim are all present or obvious. This is a question for a tournament director to decide. (See *Ways to Draw* and *Illegal Moves* for more information.)

Players must be aware that if they move from the U400 or K-6 Non-Rated section into the Championship, U1000 or U700 section, they will be required to notate their games in their new section. And those in the U400 section should remember also that if their rating goes to 400 or higher, moving into a higher section is required, not optional. Therefore, we recommend that players who are improving quickly, as indicated by a rising rating, anticipate their move into a higher section by learning and practicing notation (ideally in non-tournament games, if possible) so that taking notation is not a handicap for them when they do move up.

The notation system currently used universally is *algebraic notation*. It is actually quite logical and easily learned. Algebraic notation is explained in the Appendix, and an illustrative game is provided.

CSC provides preprinted forms at all Series tournaments for players to use as scoresheets, but players are free to use their own scoresheets or scorebooks if they wish.

## Electronic Scoresheets

An electronic scoresheet is a device that automatically records the moves of a game and can be used to print out or electronically save the game record after the game has been concluded. Some players find the use of an electronic scoresheet to be more convenient and accurate than recording moves on a paper scoresheet. Such devices typically have a display screen that shows the board position, and a player records a move by replicating on the device's display screen the move made physically on the board.

Because the device shows the new game position immediately when a move is entered, it is possible that a player, before moving on the actual game board, could “try out” a possible move, see the resulting position, “take the move back” if he doesn’t like the position, and “try out” another move. To use an electronic scoresheet in this manner is unsportsmanlike and specifically a violation of US Chess Federation Rule 15A, requiring that players make each move on the board before recording it on their scoresheets, and US Chess Federation Rule 20D, prohibiting the use of assistance during a game. Players using an electronic scoresheet to record their games are therefore reminded that such devices are to be used exclusively for recording moves *after* they are played on the board and not for calculation, analysis or any other purpose that could be construed as assistance.

All users of an electronic scoresheet are required to comply with the *US Chess Federation National Scholastic Chess Tournament Regulations, Effective February 1, 2018, Appendix F: Approved Electronic Notation Devices*, which is reproduced below:

**Introduction:** Approved electronic notation devices are in common use at US Chess National Scholastic Tournaments. US Chess no longer requires players to “register” their device with the Tournament Director (TD) before game play. Players who own these devices are responsible for setting and operating them according to the instructions below. Players who do not own an approved electronic notation device should expect they may be paired against players who do.

**Device Owners should:**

1. Set the device in the appropriate mode for recording moves.
2. Turn off or disable any setting(s) that could alert the player of illegal moves.
3. Make the move on the board before recording the move on the device.
4. Keep the device on the table (or immediately above the table) in plain view of the opponent at all times during the game.
5. Touch the device only when recording moves.
6. Never input “variations” in the device at any time during a game.
7. If asked by the opponent to see the player’s device to enter missing moves on [the opponent’s] scoresheet, the player will set the device mode to algebraic (or the appropriate mode that allows the opponent to see all previous moves) and turn the device around so the opponent can view the display screen. The device will remain on the table (or immediately above the table) at all times.
8. Never take their device with them if they leave the board while the game is still in progress.
9. Be ready to take written notation if their device malfunctions (if notation is required during game play in this section). If this happens, the player should begin notation with the next move and fill in missing moves when the player is on move by borrowing the opponent’s scoresheet or device.
10. Summon a TD when questions arise.

**Opponents:**

1. May ask the player who owns the device to show them the device, explain its use, and ensure it is correctly set for game play for this tournament.
2. May not ask the device owner to take written notation instead of using the device.
3. May ask the device owner to see the player’s device for the purpose of entering missing moves on his/her own scoresheet. When this occurs, the device will remain on the table.
4. Should summon a TD when questions arise.

**Coaches/Parents:**

1. Are strongly encouraged to assist their players in understanding proper tournament etiquette regarding these devices before tournament play begins.
2. Should summon a TD when questions arise before the start of a game.

### Tournament Directors:

1. Should check a player's device to verify that it is correctly set when requested to do so by a player.
2. Circulate among the players during competition ensuring proper usage of the device.
3. Are not responsible for knowing how to operate each type of device.

At this time the US Chess Federation has approved only four electronic scoresheets for tournament use: Monroi, Plycount, eNotate and ChessNoteR. CSC permits only these devices to be used in its tournaments.

CSC tournament directors will monitor the use of electronic scoresheets. Failure to comply with the above regulations will result in a warning upon the first instance, and in forfeiture of the game and withdrawal from the tournament upon the second instance.

## Ways to Draw

There are several ways for a game to end in a draw:

- *Stalemate*: A player is stalemated when (1) it is his move, (2) he is not in check, and (3) he has no legal move. Note that this does not mean that the player's *king* has no legal move; it means that the player has no legal move with *any piece* still on the board.
- *Mutual Agreement*: The two players could agree to end the game as a draw, in which case one player offers a draw and the other accepts. Draw offers must be made according to these rules:
  - A player may offer his opponent a draw only when it is the player's move.
  - If a player offers a draw before moving, his opponent has the right to require that the player move before accepting or refusing the draw offer.
  - A draw offer must be accepted or refused during the same move on which it is made. When a player offers his opponent a draw and the opponent moves without verbally accepting or refusing the offer, the move made constitutes a refusal of the offer.
  - Once refused, a draw offer is null. For the game to end thereafter as a draw by mutual agreement, one player or the other must make a new draw offer.
  - Offering a draw so repeatedly as to be annoying is unsportsmanlike and a violation of US Chess Federation Rule 20G.
- *Insufficient Mating Material*: Material refers to the pieces (including pawns) that a player still has on the board. A player has insufficient mating material if it is impossible for him to checkmate a lone opposing king with the pieces he has left on the board. US Chess Federation Rules 14D and 14E specify the situations that qualify as insufficient mating material, but in summary a player has insufficient mating material if he has only:
  - A king
  - A king, one bishop or one knight, and no forced mate
  - A king, two knights, and no forced mate

As soon as a position occurs in which both players have insufficient mating material, the game is a draw — no draw offer is necessary. Also, the game is a draw if time expires for one player and the player with time remaining has insufficient mating material. In other words, a player who lacks the material to win the game by checkmate, were the game to continue, cannot claim a win on time either.

- *Repetition of Position*: If the identical position occurs for the third time in a game, a player may claim a draw. Two positions are identical only if all the *same pieces* occupy precisely the *same squares* and possess the *same rights* with the *same player* to move. "Rights" refers to the ability to castle or capture *en passant*. The

occurrences of the same position do not need to be consecutive or even close together. It doesn't matter how many moves are played in between occurrences.

The game is not automatically a draw when the third occurrence of the position is played; one player or the other must make a claim of a draw on this basis. Moreover, the claim must be made in a particular manner:

- A player cannot make such a claim unless it is his move.
- The player making the claim must either:
  - pause the clock before moving, call a tournament director, and advise the tournament director of his intent to play the move that will bring about the repetition; or
  - make the move that brings about the repetition, pause the clock, call a tournament director, and advise the tournament director of the move he just played.
- If the player completes his move that brought about the repetition by pressing his clock button without or before making a draw claim, then a draw claim based on repetition of position cannot be made until such time as the position repeats again.

The player claiming the draw must be able to prove the repetition of position by (1) demonstrating a “perpetual check,” which is a situation where one player can force the repetition of the same moves consecutively to keep the opponent in check, or (2) identifying the occurrences of the position from his scoresheet. If his record is incomplete or inaccurate so that the repetition of position cannot be verified, the draw claim will not be upheld. The player making the claim may not use the opponent's scoresheet to help prove the claim.

- *50-Move Rule:* If both players make 50 consecutive moves (1) without moving any pawn and (2) without capturing any piece, then either player may claim that the game is a draw unless the last move played resulted in checkmate. The series of 50 moves can begin at any time, but if any capture or pawn move occurs, the 50-move count must begin all over again. To claim a draw on the basis of the 50-move rule, a player must either have a reasonably complete scoresheet or engage a third party, acceptable to his opponent (such as a tournament director), to count moves while the game is played.

## Pairings

### *How Players are Paired*

There are different types of tournaments, and players are paired differently in each type. Series tournaments are Swiss tournaments and individual (as opposed to team) competitions. The method of pairing described below is standard for a Swiss tournament.

Players play only other players in their own section and ordinarily never play the same player twice in the same tournament.<sup>7</sup> Because there are usually more players in each section than there are rounds in the tournament, each player plays only some (not all) of the other players in his section. Players are paired against each other as follows within each section separately.

- *Beginning rating:* Players' eligibility to play in any particular section is determined by his rating going into the tournament — this is the player's *beginning rating*. A player's beginning rating will be used throughout the tournament; i.e., a player's rating will not change from round to round during the tournament. (See *Beginning Rating for Purposes of a Tournament* under **Ratings** for more information.)

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<sup>7</sup> If the number of players in a section does not exceed the number of rounds in the tournament, it will be necessary in the Swiss system to pair players against the same opponent more than once. The Swiss system was designed to handle sections with a large number of players, not a small number. For this reason organizers of Swiss tournaments often combine small sections to create a single larger section where Swiss pairings can work as intended.

- *Round 1:* All players are listed in descending order by rating. Unrated players are listed, in no particular order, at the bottom of the pairing list. The list of players is then divided into two halves. The first player in the upper half is paired against the first player in the lower half (on the top board), the second player in the upper half is paired against the second player in the lower half (on the second board), and so forth until all players are paired. Colors are assigned randomly on the top board, and then alternate on each following board. For example, if the higher-rated player on the top board gets white, then the higher-rated player on second board gets black, and so on.

If the number of players in a section is odd, the lower half has one more player than the upper half. In this case the player with the lowest rating gets “paired out” — meaning he has no opponent for that round. *Unrated* players may not be paired out unless there is no possible way to arrange the pairings otherwise. (See also *Byes* and *Side Games*.)

- *Subsequent rounds:* For rounds 2 through 4 players are first sorted by score group. A score group is a group of players with the same game score. Within each score group players are paired as explained above for round 1, taking into account the other factors relating to pairing mentioned below. If the number of players within a score group is odd, one player in that score group is paired with a player from the next lower score group. If the number of players to be paired in the section is odd, the lowest-rated player in the lowest score group who has not already been paired out is paired out.

#### *Other Factors Relating to Pairing*

Pairings are influenced by several other factors, including alternation of color, equalization of color (the number of times a player has had white compared to the number of times he has had black), whether unrated players are in the section, whether a player has been paired out previously in that tournament (no player may be paired out more than once in a tournament), and whether any players have elected to take optional byes for the current or a future round. Moreover, players who have already played each other in a tournament ordinarily may not be paired against each other again in that tournament.<sup>7</sup> Because all these factors must be taken into account, it can be a complex and time-consuming process to determine pairings. This is why tournament directors commonly use pairing software.

Accelerated pairings may be used in situations where the number of players in the section approaches or exceeds a specified number, determined by the number of rounds. When accelerated pairings are used, the effect is to divide (by rating) a section or score group into quarters rather than halves, then to pair the first quarter against the second quarter, and the third quarter against the fourth quarter. In other respects the pairing process is as described above. Accelerated pairings are typically used only in the first round or possibly in the first two rounds of a tournament.

#### *Pairing the K-6 Non-Rated Section*

Because pairings are dependent on ratings, and players in the K-6 Non-Rated section do not have (real, official) ratings, CSC assigns each player an arbitrary, initial “rating” equal to his grade times 100. For example, a third-grader would be assigned a rating of 300. A kindergartner is assigned a rating of 90. Within each grade group (i.e., each set of players with the same rating), players will be listed in no particular order. Pairings are then determined in the manner described above for rated sections.

In the Series, players who play in the K-6 Non-Rated section multiple times will be assigned a rating as described above for their first tournament, but for their second and each subsequent tournament their final rating calculated by the pairing software for the last tournament they played in will be used as their beginning rating in their next tournament.

#### *The Pair Chart*

At the beginning of every round, a pair chart for each section is posted in a designated location. The pair chart is used to let every player know (1) who his opponent is, (2) what color he is playing, and (3) what board he is playing on. The board numbers on the pair chart correspond to numbered boards in the playing room

where each pair of players will play their game. The player listed in the left player column is always the person playing white; the person playing black is always listed in the right player column.

A pair chart sometimes shows other information as well, such as the players' ratings, US Chess Federation identification numbers, and game scores. The ratings are as of the start of the tournament and remain the same throughout the tournament. "Unr" stands for "unrated" and indicates a player for whom the US Chess Federation has not yet calculated a rating — normally this is a player who is playing in a rated tournament for the first time.

The pair chart includes result columns where the players record the result of their games. To record a game's outcome, a player enters a "1" to the left of the name of the winner and a "0" to the left of name of the loser. If the game is a draw, a player enters "1/2" beside each name. (In the case of a forfeit, enter "F" for the player who forfeited and "X" for the player who did not.) *Both* players are responsible for making sure that the result is recorded correctly. Here is an example of what a pair chart looks like with all results filled in.

[Tournament Name] — [Section Name] Pairings for Round 1						
Bd	Res	White		Res	Black	
1	0	Michael Monster	925	1	John Champion	1025
2	1/2	Ross Knight	1000	1/2	Benjamin Bishop	900
3	1	Wannabe Queen	875	0	Carlyle Castle	975
4	F	Rudy Rude	950	X	Penny Pawner	Unr

The results recorded show that on board 1 Champion defeated Monster, on board 2 Knight and Bishop drew, on board 3 Queen defeated Castle, and on board 4 Rude forfeited (and Pawner got a forfeit win).

## The Wall Chart

The wall chart shows the results of all the games in each section of a tournament round by round. By consulting the wall chart you can find out who has played whom in what round and with what color and result, who is in the lead, who is in each score group, who has taken a bye for any round, and who has withdrawn from the tournament. Players are listed normally in order of their beginning rating; the pair number indicates the player's place in a list of all players in the tournament (or section), with number 1 being the highest-rated player. For each player the wall chart shows name, US Chess Federation identification number, and rating. Additional information may also be shown, such as a player's school grade ("Cl/Gr"). For each round played (or paired) so far the wall chart shows:

- Color played (W or B)
- Opponent (identified by pair number)
- Cumulative game score
- If the player has a bye ("bye")
- If the player has withdrawn ("----")

On the next page is an example of a wall chart for a four-round tournament, in which round 3 is in progress. Two rounds have been completed; colors, opponents and results are shown for these rounds. Round 3 has been paired but not completed, so colors and opponents (by pairing number) but no results are shown for it. Nothing is shown for round 4. The first column shows the players' pair numbers.

[Tournament Name] – [Section] Wall Chart							
Pair #	Name/Rating/ID	Cl/Gr	Round 1	Round 2	Round 3	Round 4	Total
1	John Champion 2295 10000001		W 4	B 3	W 2		2.0
		12	1.0	2.0			
2	Ross Knight 2000 10000002		bye	W 6	B 1		1.0
		10	0.0	1.0			
3	Benjamin Bishop 1937 10000003		bye	W 1	B 5		0.0
		11	0.0	0.0			
4	Michael Monster 1855 10000004		B 1	W 7	B 6		1.0
		9	1.0	1.0			
5	Wannabe Queen 1735 10000005		B 7	bye	W 3		1.0
		9	0.0	1.0			
6	Irwin Eliminator 969 10000006		bye	B 2	W 4		1.5
		7	1.0	1.5			
7	Carlyle Castle Unr 10000007		W 5	B 4	bye		0.0
		6	0.0	0.0			

Because the wall chart shows cumulative scores, it takes a bit of calculation to determine the result of any particular game after round 1. To know whether a player won his round 2 game, subtract the round 1 score from the round 2 score. For example, John Champion’s round 1 score was 1 and his round 2 score was 2. This means that he scored 1 point in round 2 — indicating that he won his round 2 game. Michael Monster’s score, however, did not change from round 1 to round 2, meaning that he scored 0 in round 2 — indicating that he lost his round 2 game. In other words, a player’s result from any individual game, or round, is reflected by the *change* in that player’s score from the preceding round. In a similar fashion, by comparing the score for the bye round with the score for the preceding round, you can determine whether a bye was a full-point, half-point, or zero-point bye.

## The Standings Chart

The standings chart lists players in descending order by score so it is easier to see immediately what players are in each score group. Within each score group players are listed in order by rating. Differences between the standings chart and the wall chart as are follows:

- The order in which players are listed will change on the standings chart as their scores change, whereas players are normally listed consistently in the same order on the wall chart.
- The standings chart does not show the color played by the players; the wall chart does.
- The standings chart shows the results of each round as a win (“W”), loss (“L”) or draw (“D”) rather than as a cumulative numerical score as on the wall chart; however, the standings chart includes a total score column at the right where each player’s current cumulative score is shown.

An example standings chart is shown below.

[Tournament Name] – [Section] Standings										
#	Name	ID	Rtng	Post	Grd	Rd 1	Rd 2	Rd 3	Rd 4	Tot
1	Penny Pawner	12345678	1482	1476	8	W8	W9	D2	W3	3.5
2	Ross Knight	22345678	1249	1266	10	W4	W8	D1	W7	3.5
3	Brook Rook	32345678	1007	1062	8	W6	W5	W9	L1	3.0
4	Michael Monster	42345678	654	663	9	L2	D7	B---	W6	2.5
5	Wannabe Queen	52345678	1306	1240	9	W7	L3	L6	W9	2.0
6	Irwin Eliminator	62345678	642	665	7	L3	B---	W5	L4	2.0
7	Carlyle Castle	72345678	715	773	6	L5	D4	W8	L2	1.5
8	John Champion	82345678	735	708	12	L1	L2	L7	B---	1.0
9	Benjamin Bishop	92345678	555	551	11	B---	L1	L3	L5	1.0

In addition to the players' place numbers (first column), names, results and opponents by round, and total score, the standings chart may show additional information. In this example, the player's US Chess Federation ID number, beginning rating ("Rtng"), post-tournament rating ("Post") and school grade ("Grd") are also shown. The post-tournament rating is an *estimated* new rating for the player calculated by the pairing software. While these estimated ratings are often quite accurate, they are not official; only the US Chess Federation can calculate and publish a player's official rating.

From this standings chart we can see, for example, that Michael Monster (player 4), a 9th grader, lost in round 1 to player 2 (Ross Knight), drew player 7 (Carlyle Castle) in round 2, got paired out in round 3, and beat player 6 (Irwin Eliminator) in round 4, for a total game score of 2.5. (Note that we can't tell from the standings chart what color he played in any of his games.) He entered the tournament with a rating of 654, and gained an estimated 9 rating points, for an estimated final rating of 663.

## Side Games

When players are paired out in more than one section, it is possible to pair two players from different sections against each other in a side game. The purpose of a side game is simply to give the players the opportunity to play another game rather than be idle during the round in progress. Side games do not have any bearing on a player's score either for the individual tournament or for the Series, but they may be counted as a rated game if both players agree to have it rated. The time control for all side games will be the same as for tournament games: G/30; d5. Colors will be assigned by any commonly accepted random method (selecting from hidden pawns, coin flip, etc.).

When two or more players are paired out, the tournament director will determine whether they are interested in playing a side game. The tournament director will suggest the most reasonable pairings, if there are options, and the players may then decide whether or not to play the side game, and, if yes, whether or not to have the game submitted for rating. In order for a side game to be submitted for rating, both players must agree, before play begins, that it will be a rated game. Players who choose to play a side game for rating must play with a clock, if a clock is available, and have the result verified by a tournament director just as with a tournament game. Players who choose to play a side game but not have it rated may play with or without a clock, as they choose, and need not have the result verified by a tournament director.

## Breaking Ties

In all cases of tied scores, medal winners and the Series champion will be determined according to US Chess Federation standard tiebreaks in accordance with US Chess Federation Rule 34E. The tie break methods, in order of application, are listed below and explained with excerpts of the pertinent US Chess Federation rules.

1. Modified Median
2. Solkoff
3. Cumulative Score
4. Cumulative Score of Opposition
5. Result between tied players ("head-to-head")

### *Modified Median (Rule 34E1)*

"The Median system ... evaluates the strength of a player's opposition by summing the final scores of his or her opponents and then discarding the highest and lowest of those scores.

"In the Modified Median system, players who tie with even scores (an even score is equal to exactly one half of the maximum possible score), have the highest- and lowest-scoring opponents' scores excluded. The system is modified for players with non-even scores to disregard only the least significant opponents' scores: the lowest-scoring opponent's score is discarded for tied players with plus scores and the highest-scoring for players tied with minus scores. ..."

### *Solkoff (Rule 34E2)*

“The Solkoff system is the same as the Median (explained above, Rule 34E1) except that no opponents’ scores are discarded.”

### *Cumulative Score (Rule 34E3)*

“To determine cumulative tie-break score, simply add up the cumulative (running) score for each round. For example, if a player’s results were win, loss, win, draw, loss, the wall chart would show a cumulative score round by round as 1, 1, 2, 2.5, 2.5. The cumulative tie-break total is 9 (1 + 1 + 2 + 2.5 + 2.5 = 9). ... One point is subtracted from the sum for each unplayed win or full-point bye (22B); likewise, one-half point is subtracted from the sum for each unplayed draw or half-point bye.”

The practical effect of the Cumulative Score method is that wins in early rounds have more weight than wins in later rounds because they are counted more times. (A point for a win in round 1 is counted in that round and in every subsequent round, whereas a point for a win in the last round is counted only in that round.) The rationale for this system is that players who win their games are paired against stronger opponents in their next round than are players who lose — so that overall players who win early in the tournament play a tougher schedule than do players who lose early.

### *Cumulative Score of Opposition (Rule 34E9)*

“The cumulative tie-break points [score values] of each opponent are calculated as in 34E3, and these are added together.”

### *Result between tied players (“head-to-head”) (Rule 34E5)*

“Self-explanatory if two tie, but useful only when they were paired and did not draw. If more than two tie, all results among tied players should be considered, with rank according to plus or minus, not percentage. For example, 3–1 (+2) beats 1–0 (+1).”

## **Provision of Equipment**

CSC provides boards, pieces, clocks and scoresheets for all its tournaments. Players may use their own scoresheets (including approved electronic scoresheets) or scorebooks if they wish to do so.

Players are expected to provide their own writing implements. We recommend that every player bring at least two pens or pencils. Tournament directors are not responsible for having writing implements to give or lend to players.

## **Watching Games in Progress**

Except for the tournament directors, we ask that all adults, including parents and coaches, stay out of the tournament playing room while any game is in progress. Adults may watch the proceedings from outside the playing room if the venue makes this possible. In the Championship section only, players may watch other games in progress in their section when they have completed their own games, provided that they observe proper conduct for spectators. However, any player may object to the actions or presence of a spectator and has the right to have the spectator removed. Players in all other sections are required to stay out of the tournament rooms after they have completed their own games until pairings for the next round are posted. (See *Sportsmanship* for more information.)

## **Sportsmanship**

All players are expected to show good sportsmanship throughout the tournaments. Good sportsmanship includes but is not limited to the following practices:

- Be courteous to your fellow players, the tournament directors and everyone else at the tournament.
- Shake hands with your opponent before and after your game.
- Avoid behavior that annoys or distracts your opponent.
- Be a gracious winner when you win; don't make a big show about winning a chess game, don't gloat, and remember how you feel when you lose. When you lose, lose with dignity. It's OK to be disappointed, even upset, but keep it in perspective. Learning from your losses creates more opportunities to win.

A chess game is a contest between only the two people playing it. It is unsporting and against the rules to interfere in any way with someone else's game. Interference includes both commenting on the game and doing anything that distracts the players. This means:

- No kibitzing — ever! To kibitz means basically to butt in. It is unsporting and against the rules to meddle in any way with someone else's game. Meddling includes commenting on the game and doing anything that distracts the players.
- No comments to either player or to anyone else while the game is in progress — explicitly including, for example, any comment relating to illegal moves, flagfall, or the position on the board.
- No gestures or facial expressions that could be construed as comments, whether directed to anyone in particular or not.
- No behavior that might disturb or distract any player, whether related to a game being played or not — this includes:
  - Unnecessary conversation with your opponent or anyone else in the playing room.
  - Crowding into a player's personal space when looking at a game that you are not playing — stay a respectful distance away from the board.
  - Loud talk and noisy activity, whether inside or outside the playing room, anywhere near games that are still in progress.

## Food and Drinks at Tournaments

Vending machines might be available in some venues, but they might not be accessible or stocked. CSC will publish on its website ([Series Venue Information](#)) information about the availability of food at a tournament or conveniently nearby; however, as a general rule, absent any specific information to the contrary, participants should not expect food to be available for purchase onsite. Participants are welcome to bring whatever lunch, snacks and drinks they might want for consumption (in the skittles area) during the tournament. We ask all players and their families and friends to be conscientious about cleaning up after themselves so that we do not jeopardize the privilege of using our venues in the future. We ask that players not have food or drinks other than water in the playing rooms. Thank you for your understanding and assistance in this important matter.

## Inclement Weather Policy

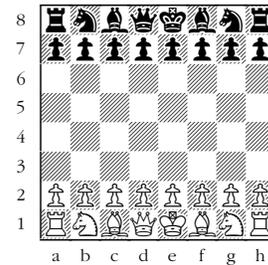
It is possible that inclement weather or some other serious circumstance will make it prudent to cancel or delay a tournament. When circumstances permit in such a situation, the tournament directors will post advance notice on our "Bulletin Board" at [www.chesscincinnati.com](http://www.chesscincinnati.com) no later than 6:00 pm on the evening prior to the tournament. In the absence of such notice, parents are asked to check our website on the morning of the tournament before leaving home for any new or updated notice, and to be guided by weather or other advisories issued by the government, exercising their own best judgment with respect to the situation. CSC emphatically does not want to put any players or their families at risk by conducting a tournament under hazardous conditions, and sensible caution should govern everyone's actions.

## Appendix: Chess Notation

Chess notation is a system for recording the moves of a game. The official system now in use, *algebraic notation*, is described here. We strongly encourage players new to notation to become familiar with notation by recording a few games as they play before playing in their first tournament. However, such players should not be unduly concerned: while notation is required, *perfect* notation is not. Everyone makes mistakes and even very experienced players can forget to write down some moves. If you forget to write down one or more moves, just skip a line on your scoresheet and carry on from where you are in the game. The more you notate, the easier it gets! Moreover, recording your games so that you can replay and analyze them is one the best ways to improve as a player.

1. Squares are identified using the files and ranks as coordinates.
  - a. The files are the rows of squares that run from one player to the other (or, in a diagram, “up and down” the board); they are labeled “a” through “h.” The ranks are the rows of squares that run across the board from left to right; they are numbered 1 through 8. Each square is identified by its file and rank: a6, d4, etc., with the file letter always preceding the rank number. *Important: Files are always identified by small (lower case) letters. Thus “b” designates only the b file.*

- b. The white pieces are set up on the side of the board where the files run from a on the left to h on the right, and the ranks run from 1 (closest) to 8 (farthest away).
- c. From the point of view of the person playing black (i.e., looking down from the top of the diagram), the black pieces are set up on the side of the board where the files run from h on the left to a on the right, and the ranks run from 8 (closest) to 1 (farthest away).



2. Pieces are identified by letters: K = king, Q = queen, R = rook, B = bishop, N = knight. (Be careful not to use “K” for a knight.) No letter is used for pawns. *Important: Pieces are always identified by capital (upper case) letters. Thus “B” designates only a bishop.*
3. Moves that do not involve capturing a piece are recorded as follows:
  - a. For pieces other than pawns, moves are recorded by identifying the piece being moved and its destination square. For example, Nf3 means that a knight moved to square f3.
  - b. For pawns, only the destination square is recorded. For example, e4 means that a pawn moved to square e4.
4. Moves that involve capturing a piece are recorded with an “x” inserted before the destination square. The “x” signifies a capture.
  - a. For pieces other than pawns, captures are recorded by identifying the piece being moved followed by an “x” and its destination square. For example, Nxf3 means that a knight moved to square f3, capturing a piece that was located there.
  - b. For pawns, captures are recorded by identifying the file that the pawn moved from followed by an “x” and its destination square. For example, exf6 means that a pawn moved from the e file to square f6, capturing a piece that was located there.
5. If two pieces of the same type can move to the same square, either the rank or the file that the piece moved from is indicated in order to make it clear which piece was moved. For example, when a rook is on a1 and another rook is on f1, and they can both move to e1, the move is recorded as Rae1 if the a1

rook was moved, and as Rfe1 if the f1 rook was moved. Similarly if a knight is on f3 and another knight is on f5, either knight can capture a piece on d4, so the capture is recorded as either N3xd4 or N5xd4.

6. Special moves are noted as follows:

- a. Check is indicated by “+” written at the end of the move, double check by “++”, and checkmate by a “#”; for example, Qa4+, Nh3++, Rd8#.
- b. Castling is written as 0-0 when it is done on the kingside (the kingside of the board is files e through h) and as 0-0-0 when it is done on the queenside (the queenside is files a through d). A convenient way to remember these codes is that the number of zeroes corresponds to the number of squares that the rook moves when castling: two squares on the kingside and three on the queenside.
- c. *En passant* capture is recorded just as any other pawn capture is; for example, when a pawn on the e file moves to f6 and in the process captures a pawn that was on f5, the move is written “exf6.” The move record indicates the capturing pawn’s destination square, not the square occupied by the pawn that got captured.
- d. Pawn promotion is written as any normal pawn move followed by “=” and the letter for the piece that replaces the pawn. For example, b8=Q indicates that a pawn was moved from b7 to b8 and promoted to a queen, while exf8=N indicates that a pawn on the e file captured a piece on f8 and was promoted to a knight. When the promotion results in check, double check, or checkmate, then +, ++, or # is added at the end of the move as applicable.

7. A complete move record comprises a move by white, always written in the left column, and a move by black, always written in the right column. Conventionally these move pairs are numbered, but the numbers are for convenience of reference and are not required for the game record. (On printed scoresheets, the move numbers are pre-printed, so players do not need to write them.) This example illustrates:

	White (left)	Black (right)
1.	e4	e5
2.	Nf3	Nc6
3.	Bb5	a3

and so on.

8. Additional points about taking notation:

- a. While a game is being played, the players record only the moves played (by white and black), and optionally any or all of the following: the move numbers if these are not preprinted on the scoresheet, notations of time elapsed or remaining, and draw offers (designated by “=” written after the move when the offer is made). No other comments or notations of any kind are permitted on the scoresheet.
- b. When *either player* has five minutes or less of time remaining, *both players* are excused from the requirement to record further moves.
- c. To distinguish moves played by black from moves played by white when the moves are not presented in columns (as in a scoresheet), it is conventional to use an *ellipsis* (“...”) to designate moves played by black. Therefore, when an ellipsis precedes a move, it signifies that that the move was played by black and not by white. For example: “Bb4” can mean only that white moved a bishop to b4, while “... Bb4” can mean only that black moved a bishop to b4.

### Illustrative Game

The illustrative game below illustrates algebraic notation and includes some comments, expressed with either symbols or words, as an example of analysis that would have been added for the published game record after the game was played. (This game was contrived only for the purposes of illustrating all the elements of algebraic notation and is decidedly *not* an example of a well played game.)

	<u>White</u>	<u>Black</u>		<u>White</u>	<u>Black</u>
1.	e4	e5	31.	Rd1	a5
2.	Nf3	b6	32.	bxa5	Rxa5
3.	Bc4	Bb7	33.	Kg2	Rd5
4.	0-0	Nc6	34.	Nb2	Rxd1
5.	d4	exd4	35.	Nxd1	c5
6.	e5	f5	36.	Nc3	Kc7
7.	exf6	Nxf6	37.	Kf3	Kc6
8.	Bg5	h6	38.	Ke4	b5
9.	Bxf6	Qxf6	39.	Nb1	b4
10.	Nbd2	Be7	40.	Kd3	Kb5
11.	Nb3	0-0-0	41.	f4	c4+
12.	Nfxd4	Rhf8	42.	Kc2	b3+
13.	Kh1	Qh4	43.	Kb2	Kb4
14.	g3 ?	Nxd4+ !	44.	Nc3	Kc5
			45.	h4	d5
			46.	g4	d4
			47.	h5	dx3+
			48.	Kc1	b2+
			49.	Kc2	Kb4
			50.	Kd1	b1=Q+
			51.	Ke2	Qe4+
			52.	Kf2	Qxf4+
			53.	Ke1	c2
			54.	Ke2	c1=Q

Black's move results in *discovered* check (by the bishop). There is no notation to distinguish a *discovered* check from any other check.

Even though both of his rooks have the black knight *en prise*, white is unable to capture it because doing so would not rescue his king from the simultaneous check by the bishop. He has no choice but to move his king.

18.	...	Bb4
19.	c3	Nf3+
20.	Qxf3 ??	Bxf3
21.	cx4	Rde8
22.	Nd4	Re4
23.	Nxf3 ?!	Rxc4
24.	Ne5	Re4
25.	Ng6	Rfe8
26.	Rad1	Re2
27.	Nf4	Rxb2
28.	Nd3	Rxa2
29.	Rfe1	Rxe1
30.	Rxe1	Ra3

Since black already has a queen on the board, what does he use for this second queen? It is common now for tournament sets to include two queens of each color. Alternatively, players use a queen borrowed from another set, or (in the US) a rook turned upside down or even two pawns placed on the same square.

55. g5

And now, for the *coup de grâce* — black can checkmate with any one of four moves, and each of these moves can be written in either of two ways.

55.	...	Qcd2# or Q1d2#
	...	Qfe3# or Q4e3#
	...	Qcf1# or Q1f1#
	...	Qff1# or Q4f1#