Cincinnati Scholastic Chess

Series Handbook

Revised September 2023

This Handbook provides information about selected rules and procedures that are applicable to tournament chess generally, and about the U.S. Chess Federation. It is intended as a supplement to the information posted on the CSC website, www.chesscincinnati.com. For complete and authoritative information about U.S. Chess Federation rules, please see the *U.S. Chess Federation's Official Rules of Chess*, 7th Edition (2019), found online at www.uschess.org.

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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 or she is given is a full-point bye for that round, equivalent for scoring purposes to having played a game and won it (because the player had no choice in the matter). "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. Being paired out does not affect the player's rating. No player may be paired out more than once in any tournament.

Half-point bye: A half-point bye is an optional bye taken when a player chooses not to play a particular round, and is equivalent for scoring purposes to having played a game and drawn it. How many half-point byes a player may take, for which rounds, whether half-point byes are even available, and other applicable conditions are determined by the tournament organizer and specified in the tournament's publicity. A half-point bye does not affect the player's rating. Typically a player who is paired out may not later take a half-point bye; and a player who has taken or requested a half-point bye will not be paired out unless there is no suitable alternative pairing. There is normally a deadline during the tournament by which all players are committed to their byes; that is, after the deadline a player may no longer request, change or cancel a bye.

Zero-point bye: If a player takes a bye when no half-point bye is available to him or her, the bye will be a zero-point bye. When a player withdraws from a tournament in progress, he or she is given a zero-point bye for every round after the last round he or she played. A zero-point bye does not affect a player's rating.

Ratings

A rating is a numerical measure of a player's skill at playing chess, or, in chess terms, the player's "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, online) 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 a tournament — 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.

The US Chess Federation (USCF) calculates different ratings for different over-the-board (otb) time controls, based on the *total playing time* for the game. The total playing time is the sum of the "thinking" time, expressed in minutes, allowed to each player plus the time, expressed in seconds, for the delay or increment allowed at each move. For example, the time control for Series tournaments is G/30;d5, meaning that each player has 30 minutes of "thinking" time for the game with a 5-second delay at each move; so the total playing time is 30 minutes + (5 seconds x 60) = 35 minutes. (In shorthand, the total playing time is *mm+ss*.) The different ratings calculated by the USCF are as follows:

- *Blitz:* total playing time is between 5 and 10 minutes inclusive ($5 \leq mm+ss \leq 10$, and "thinking" time cannot be less than 3 minutes)
- *Quick:* total playing time is more than 10 minutes and less than 30 minutes ($10 < mm+ss < 30$)
- *Regular:* total playing time is more than 65 minutes ($mm+ss > 65$)

If the total playing time is between 30 and 65 minutes inclusive ($30 \leq mm+ss \leq 65$), the game is *dual rated*, meaning that it is included in the calculations for both *Quick* and *Regular* ratings. Series games are dual rated. The USCF also calculates separate ratings for online play, using different time controls.

Unrated players will acquire an official but "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. A player's rating is provisional until it is based on more than 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 an established (not provisional) rating that is based on more than 25 games. A provisional rating can fluctuate greatly as results are processed. Established ratings also fluctuate but usually with smaller incremental changes than for provisional ratings.

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 achieved 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:

| Rating	Class		Rating	Class
2400 and above	Senior Master		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		*The lowest possible rating is 100.*	

Beginning Rating for Purposes of a Tournament

A player's rating determines both what section(s) he or she is eligible to play in and, in combination with other factors, how he or she will be paired within that section. Because a player's rating will change virtually every time he or she plays a rated game, it is helpful to understand what rating is used as a 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*.

- Every month the US Chess Federation publishes a new "rating supplement" and "rating database" that lists the *official ratings* for players as of the first day of that month. Because of the time needed to prepare and publish each new supplement or database, the data cut-off for calculating the new ratings is the third Wednesday of the month in order for the supplement and database to be effective as of the first day of the following month. For example, for official ratings as of July 1, 2021, no results reported after June 16, 2021 were included in the rating calculations.

- Tournament results are typically submitted within a day or two of a tournament's conclusion, and the US Chess Federation calculates new ratings usually on the same day that it receives the results. As soon as they are calculated, these new ratings are published in the wall chart for the tournament and are

players' *most recent rating*. Any time a player has new results reported after the data cut-off for the most recent supplement/database, his or her *most recent rating* will likely differ from his or her *official rating*.[1]

To see a player's ratings, go to www.uschess.org and use the Player Lookup function to find the player's record. You can enter either the player's name or USCF ID number. When the player's record opens, the ratings displayed on the front page are his or her several current *official* ratings. The screen shot below shows an example:
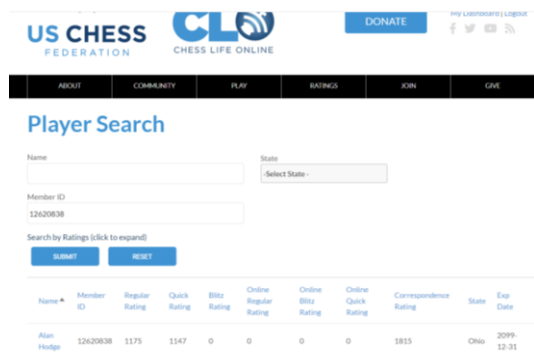
To find the most recent rating, click on the player's name, and then look on the Tournament History ("Tnmt. Hst") tab, illustrated in the screen print below. All the tournaments that the player has played in are listed in order from the most recent (listed first) to oldest, along with the player's most recent (and last previous) Regular, Quick and Blitz ratings. Clicking on any tournament will open its US Chess Federation wall chart.

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

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[1] It is possible but very unlikely that a player's rating will not change when new results are reported unless the player is on his or her "floor". A floor is a rating below which a player's *official* rating will not fall regardless of any results reported. If a player's rating exceeded 1400 at any time, his or her floor equals his or her highest lifetime rating rounded down to the nearest hundred less 200. For example, a player whose lifetime highest rating is 1569 has a floor of 1300. Players who were never rated higher than 1400 do not have a floor.

calculates a rating for the member based on his or her performance in rated tournaments and matches. Membership in the US Chess Federation is required for participation in any rated section of a tournament.

In addition to offering individual and family membership options for scholastic players, the US Chess Federation offers optional subscriptions to receive by mail printed copies of the magazines *Chess Life* or *Chess Life for Kids*. US Chess Federation memberships and magazine subscriptions may be purchased or renewed directly online at www.uschess.org/Join or (usually) through CSC as part of entering a CSC tournament.

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 not on the board.

Touch-Move and Castling

When castling, a player must move the king first and then the rook. When a player touches the rook first, castling is not allowed, and the player is obligated to move the rook if it is legal to do so. If there is no legal move with the rook, the player 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) to replace the pawn. A player may pick up an off-the-board piece, decide otherwise, and select a different piece. This does not violate the touch-move rule, and a player can change his or her selection until the replacement piece touches the promotion square on the board. At that point, the choice of a replacement piece is determined (even if he has not yet released the piece) and the selected piece takes the place of the pawn.

When choosing a piece to replace the pawn, a player is not limited to pieces that have been captured. For example, a player who wants to promote a pawn to a rook can do so even when he or she already has two (or more) rooks 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 or her own clock is running, and (3) the player announces his or her intention to adjust a piece before doing so by saying "adjust" (or the French term "j'adoube") 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 which square it occupies and then presses the clock, the opponent has the right to restart the player's clock and ask him or her to adjust the piece.

Illegal Moves

When an illegal move is played, such as when a player makes a move that does not get him or her out of check, the opponent has the right to claim an illegal move, and may choose to make a claim or not. An opponent who chooses to make a claim must call a tournament director to do so. An opponent who chooses not to make a claim should, without making a move, immediately restart the player's clock and bring the illegal move to the player's attention. 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 play as usual, 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 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. (Note that 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.) 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 or her last move played, and the game will continue from that position with the opponent now on the move. The touch-move rule applies.

Notation

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 system for recording moves is called *notation*, and the record of a game's moves is called a *scoresheet* or a *game score*. The tournament organizer may stipulate that a particular type of scoresheet be used, in which case the organizer is obligated to provide the stipulated scoresheets for the players' use, or prohibit the use of certain scoresheets, such as electronic scoresheets. The standard notation system currently used universally is *algebraic notation*. The normal practice when a player is on the move is to make a move, press the clock, and record the move played; and when the

opponent is on the move, to record the opponent's move immediately after he or she makes it. However, it is permissible to reply to the opponent's move before recording it; that is to say, your opponent moves, then you make your move, then you record both your opponent's move and your own move at the same time.

Several rules apply to taking notation, including these:

- *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.

- *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 choose to continue to take notation.

- *US Chess Federation Rule 15D:* Sometimes a player will want to use the opponent's scoresheet to correct his or her own scoresheet. US Chess Federation rules allow this, provided that both players have at least five minutes of time remaining, and it is unsportsmanlike to refuse to make one's scoresheet available for this purpose. However, a player is permitted to make corrections to his or her scoresheet only when his or her clock is running (i.e., to correct a scoresheet, a player must be on the move and is not permitted to pause the clock). If any issue arises in connection with correcting a scoresheet, including an opponent's refusal to make a 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 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, which could be the deduction of time from his or her clock, forfeit of the game, or withdrawal from the tournament. A player may make a claim if his or her opponent is not taking notation, but a tournament director can intervene even if no claim is made.

A player who does not notate, stops notating, or notates only intermittently forfeits the right to make certain claims that depend on 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.

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 or she 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 the following electronic scoresheets for tournament use by players:

- MonRoi Personal Chess Manager
- Plycount LLC, Plycounter®
- ChessNoteЯ by Black Mirror Studio, LLC,
- ChessNoteR-Nexus9 Tablet by Black Mirror Studio, LLC

Pairings

How Players are Paired

There are different types of tournaments, and players are paired differently in each type, but the commonest type in the United State is the Swiss tournaments. The method of pairing described below is standard for a Swiss tournament.

All the players is a tournament are divided into groups, called sections, defined usually by rating. Players play only other players in their own section and ordinarily never play the same player twice in the same tournament.[2] 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 or her 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 or her 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.

- *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 is assigned white, then the higher-rated player on second board is assigned black, and so on.

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[2] 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.

- *Pairing a player out:* 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 is "paired out" — meaning he or she has no opponent for that round and will be given a full-point bye. If a tournament has fewer or more than four rounds, an unrated player may be considered the lowest rated player and therefore may be paired out; but if a tournament has four rounds, it is normal not to pair out an unrated players unless there is no suitable alternative pairing. The reason for this is that a player needs to play four rated games in order to obtain his or her first official rating; accordingly if a tournament has four rounds, unrated players are "protected" from being paired out if possible so that they can obtain their official rating by playing in a single tournament. (In a tournament with fewer than four rounds, an unrated player with no rated games to his or her credit cannot obtain an official rating in any case, whereas in a tournament with more than four rounds, an unrated player may be paired out and still play the four games required for an official rating.) No player may be paired out more than once in any tournament.

- *Subsequent rounds:* For each subsequent round players are first sorted by score group. A score group is a group of players with the same game score. The first group paired is the group with the highest score, and pairing proceeds systematically in order of score to the group with the lowest 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 entire 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 (playing the color that is the opposite of the color played in the previous round), equalization of color (the number of times a player has had each color), 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. 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 substantially exceeds a specified number, determined by the number of rounds (2^x where *x* is the number of rounds; for example, for a five-round tournament, the specified number is 32: $2 \times 2 \times 2 \times 2 \times 2 = 32$). 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 two rounds of a tournament.

The Pairing Chart

At the beginning of every round, the pairings for each section are shown in a pairing chart that is posted in a designated location. The pairing chart is used to let every player know (1) who his or her opponent is, (2) what color to play, and (3) what board to play on. The board numbers on the pairing chart correspond to numbered boards in the playing room where the players will play their games. 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 pairing 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 an official rating — this is usually a player who is playing in a rated tournament for the first time.

The pairing chart includes result columns where the players record the result of their games. To record a game's result, 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. Below is an example of a pair chart with 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), ranked by rating, 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"), team, and state. 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.

The wall chart shows cumulative scores, so it takes a bit of arithmetic 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.

	[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		B 3	W 6	B 1		1.0
		10	0.5	1.0			
3	Benjamin Bishop 1937 10000003		W 2	W 1	B 5		0.5
		11	0.5	0.5			
4	Michael Monster 1855 10000004		B 1	W 7	B 6		1.0
		9	0.0	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		2.0
		6	1.0	1.0	1.0		

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 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. "B---" indicates a full-point bye, and "H---" indicates a half-point bye.

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. He entered the tournament with a rating of 654, and gained an estimated 9 rating points, for an estimated "post" 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. A side game does not have any bearing on a player's tournament score, but it may be counted as a rated game if both players agree to have it rated (that is, to have its result factored into the calculation of the players' new ratings). The time control for a side game may be the same as or different from the time control for the tournament games, as decided between the players and the tournament director. Colors are assigned by any commonly accepted random method (selecting from hidden pawns, coin flip, etc.).

Breaking Ties

In all cases of tied scores, the order of finish among the tied players is determined by one or more of several tiebreak methods. The US Chess Federation has designated four methods as the standard tiebreaks in Rule 34E, but organizers and tournament directors may use another tiebreak or combinations of tiebreaks, provided that they specify in their publicity which tiebreaks will apply. The USCF standard tiebreaks, 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

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 tiebreak 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 tiebreak 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 tiebreak points of each opponent are calculated as in 34E3, and these are added together."

Sandbagging

Manipulating one's rating by intentionally losing games is called sandbagging. A player's purpose in sandbagging is to achieve a lower rating in order to become eligible to play in a section with a lower rating ceiling, with the idea that the player is likelier to win more games against the assumed weaker competition — and therefore have improved chances of winning a prize. Sandbagging violates the rules and ethics of chess, is disrespectful and unfair to the player's opponents, and is dishonest. In a word, sandbagging is cheating. The pertinent rules are identified below (quoted from *U.S. Chess Federation Official Rules of Chess*, 7th Edition, 2019).

> **20A. Conduct of players.** Players shall participate in the spirit of fair play and good sportsmanship, and must observe the US Chess Code of Ethics.
>
> **US Chess Code of Ethics, Standards of Conduct.** 6. … The following is a list of examples of actions or behavior that are considered unethical …
>
> 6(c): Deliberately losing a game for payment, or to lower one's rating, or for any other reason; or attempting to induce another player to do so. Deliberately failing to play at one's best in a game, in any manner inconsistent with the principles of good sportsmanship, honesty, or fair play.
>
> **20L. Manipulating results.** Collusion to fix or throw games, whether before or during the game, in order to manipulate prize money, title norms, ratings, or for any other purpose is illegal ….

With the objective of protecting our events from sandbaggers, we have implemented the following policy:

> When CSC finds evidence of sandbagging by any player who has entered a CSC event, that player will be subject to disciplinary actions, which may include any or all of the following: forfeiture of games and loss of points scored, a requirement to play in a higher section, ineligibility for any prize, expulsion from the tournament, and exclusion from future CSC events.