

TOURNAMENT ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

What Players are Expected to Know, In Addition to the rules of the Game, Before Playing in a Chess Tournament

Part I: Procedural Matters

Player check-in: No check-in is required *per se*; however, a list of the players in each section will be posted near the registration desk. It is recommended that, upon arrival, players check the appropriate list to confirm that they are listed in the correct section and any bye requested is properly indicated. If anything listed for you is incorrect, see the registration desk staff.

Recording Game Results: When your game is over, quietly pack up your equipment and leave the room. **Record the result of your game on the pair chart.** To record the result, enter a “1” in the space to the left of the player who won the game, and a “0” in the space to the left of the player who lost. If the game was a draw, enter “1/2” beside both names. ***Both players are responsible for making sure that the game result is recorded correctly.***

Withdrawing: If you decide that you do not want 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. If you leave the tournament without so notifying a tournament director, you will be paired in the next round as if you were still present and playing. This leaves the player against whom you are paired without an opponent, results in a forfeit for you, and can cause other problems for the players and tournament directors. *Withdrawing without notice is bad for everyone — please don't do it.*

Byes: A bye indicates a round which a player does not to play for some reason. There are full-point, half-point and zero point byes.

Full-point byes: If there is an odd number of players in a section for any round, one player will be left without an opponent. This is called being paired out. The player who is paired out gets a full-point bye for that round, which is equivalent to playing a game and winning it. No one can be paired out more than once in any tournament.

Half-point byes: If a player chooses not to play any particular round of a tournament, he may elect to take an optional half-point bye for that round. Tournament advertising will indicate how many half-point byes a player may take as well as any restrictions (e.g., any round for which half-point byes are not permitted and the deadline for requesting a bye or changing a bye already requested).

Zero-point byes: If a player chooses not to play a round of a tournament and has already taken the permitted number of half-point byes, he may take a zero-point bye for any additional bye round. (If a player does not want to play any of the remaining rounds, he should simply withdraw from the tournament. See *Withdrawing* below.)

Changing Sections: To move into another section, see the registration desk staff. A player may not change sections after round 1 pairings are posted.

Pairings: Pairing charts will be posted for each section in a designated area. The pairing chart tells you (1) what board (by number) you will be playing on, (2) what color you will be playing (the player listed on the left plays white; the player listed on the right plays black), and (3) who your opponent is. Additional information for each player, such as his score or rating, might also be shown.

Equipment: Players are expected to bring their own pieces, boards and clocks unless otherwise indicated in the tournament advertising. Scoresheets are provided but players may also bring and use their own scoresheets or scorebooks if they like, except in a section submitted for FIDE rating.

Part II: Rules of Tournament Chess

Tournament chess has many rules in addition to the rules of the game itself. The eight tournament rules most often affecting players are explained below. Everyone playing in a tournament is subject to these rules; therefore we urge all players to be thoroughly familiar with these rules before taking part in a tournament.

1. *Sportsmanship*

All players are expected to behave in a courteous and sportsmanlike manner at all times, to refrain from talking except as necessary, and never to interfere in any way with anyone else's game. All players are both expected and required by the rules of tournament chess to show good sportsmanship throughout the tournament. For example:

- Shake hands with your opponent before and after your game.
- While your game is in progress, do not talk with anyone unless it is *necessary* to say something to your opponent or a tournament director about your game.
- When your game is over, do not talk in the tournament room if any game is still in progress.
- Avoid behavior that might distract other players, including loud talk and noisy activity near where games are being played, even if you are outside the tournament room.
- **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. Never comment to anyone (except to a tournament director at his direction) about a game that is in progress. Commenting includes not only audible verbal remarks but also gestures or facial expressions that could be construed as comments, whether directed to anyone in particular or not.

2. *Clock-Related Rules*

All players must use a clock. 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. Any player without a clock may borrow one from the tournament director if necessary.

A chess clock is actually two clocks in one: one clock and button for each player. After making a move, press your clock button to stop your clock and start your opponent's clock. Repeat this procedure — move then press your clock button — at every move for the entire game.

- Every player should know how to pause the clock; if you don't know, ask your opponent or the tournament director. When a clock is paused, its operation is suspended so that neither player's clock is running. Most clocks have an obvious pause button or switch.
- Every player should know why to pause the clock. It is permitted to pause the clock when you have any question, claim or issue that needs the attention of the tournament director. You may not pause the clock for any other reason. For example, you may not pause the clock if you go to the restroom or if you consult your opponent's scoresheet to correct your own. (In fact, you may not consult your opponent's scoresheet unless it is your move — that is, unless your own clock is running.)
- Each player must press his or her clock button with the same hand used to move his or her piece. This does not mean that a player must make all moves of the game with the same hand; it means that on each move of the game a player must press the clock button with whichever hand he or she used to make that move.
- Until your opponent presses his or her clock button to start your clock, it is not your move, so *do not make your move while your opponent's clock is running*. If it is obvious that your opponent has forgotten to press his or her clock, it is sporting to call attention to this, but you are not required to do so.

- After pressing the clock button to complete a move, a player must remove his or her 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.

Rules relating to the expiration of time:

- When time expires for one player, the player with time remaining may claim a win on time. To make such a claim, pause the clock as soon as you notice that your opponent's time has expired (to demonstrate that you still have time remaining) and then raise your hand to get a tournament director's attention. When time expires for a player, it is said that his "flag fell"; the expiration of a player's time is called "flagfall."
- When making a claim as described above, you will be declared the winner only if you have mating material remaining on the board. If you do not have mating material, the game will be scored as a draw. You do not have mating material if you have only a king, a king and a bishop, a king and a knight, or a king and two knights, and you cannot force a checkmate.
- "Flagfall" refers to the expiration of a player's time, which is when the player's clock reads 0:00. Only the two players involved in the game may call flagfall. For anyone else to bring attention to the fact that a player's time has expired is both a violation of USCF rules and unsportsmanlike interference in the game. Anyone who does this is subject to expulsion from the tournament and forfeiture of all games played, at the sole discretion of the chief tournament director.
- 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 was checkmate.
- The flag is considered fallen when either player points this out. 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 played the checkmate or stalemate had fallen before the move was made.

3. Touch-Move

The touch-move rule is in effect for all tournament games. Players do not have the option, either individually or jointly with their opponent, to choose not to abide by the touch-move rule. In simple terms, this rule 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 (that is, any piece that was captured and removed from the board). The touch-move rule also does not apply to adjusting a piece as long as a player adjusts the piece in the proper manner.

4. 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 *7. Rules for Draws*)
- 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 or she has grounds for a claim, or simply has a question, it is critical that he or she bring the matter to a tournament director's attention immediately when the situation arises in his or her 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.

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.

5. Announcing Check

A player is not required to say "check" when putting his opponent in check, and most tournament players do not. Every player is responsible for recognizing when he or she is in check.

When a player fails to recognize check and makes any 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. If the opponent chooses to make a claim, he or she should call a tournament director as explained under *Player Claims* above. If the opponent chooses not to make a claim, he or she should, without making a move, immediately restart the player's clock and point out that the player is in check. Whether or not the opponent makes a claim, the player must "take back" the move and make another legal move. (If the player has no legal move, then he or she is checkmated.)

When both players fail to recognize a check, any moves played stand until one player or the other recognizes the check, in which case the players should then pause the clock and raise a hand to call a tournament director.

6. Taking Notation

"Taking notation" means recording the moves of a game, move by move, as it is played. A player must record not only his own moves but also the moves of his or her opponent. The form (or paper) on which moves are recorded is called a *scoresheet*. For those who do not know how to take notation, instructions are provided in Part III.

All players *are required* to take notation; however, when either player has less than five minutes remaining on his clock, both players are excused from this requirement, except in a section submitted for FIDE rating.

In any section, a player who stops taking notation, or whose scoresheet is incomplete, forfeits the right to make certain claims that are dependent on a scoresheet (even if the opponent has a scoresheet). Some claims require that a scoresheet be "reasonably complete." A scoresheet that is missing up to three move pairs qualifies as reasonably complete for purposes of the claim if the moves necessary to establish the claim are all present.

It is not uncommon that during the course of a game a player will want to consult the opponent's scoresheet to correct or confirm his or her own scoresheet. Doing so is allowed by the rules of tournament chess, and it is unsportsmanlike for a player to refuse to allow an opponent to look at a scoresheet for this purpose. A player may make corrections to his or her scoresheet only when his or her own clock is running. If any problem arises in connection with correcting a scoresheet, 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.

7. Rules for Draws

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

- *Stalemate*: A player is stalemated when (1) it is his or her move, (2) he or she is not in check, and (3) he or she has no legal move. This does not mean that the player's *king* has no legal move; it means that the player can make no legal move with *any piece* still on the board.
- *Mutual Agreement*: When two players agree to end the game as a draw, one player offers a draw and the other accepts according to these rules:
 - It is proper to offer your opponent a draw only when it is your move. If you offer a draw while it is your opponent's move, the opponent may choose to accept, refuse or ignore your draw offer.
 - If you offer a draw before moving, your opponent has the right to require that you move before accepting or refusing your offer, and the draw offer stands until the opponent decides to accept or reject it (that is, a player who offers a draw before moving may not withdraw the draw offer either before or after making that move).
 - A draw offer must be accepted or refused during the same move on which it is made. When a player offers a draw and the opponent moves without verbally accepting or refusing the offer, the move made constitutes a refusal of the draw offer.
 - Once refused, a draw offer is null; one player or the other must make a new draw offer (on a different move) for the game to end as a draw by mutual agreement.
 - Repeatedly offering a draw when the draw offers are consistently refused is grounds for a claim of annoying and unsportsmanlike behavior.
- *Insufficient Mating Material*: The game is drawn if both players have insufficient mating material. In this case each player has only a king, a king and a bishop, a king and a knight, or a king and two knights, and neither can force a checkmate.
- *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 to capture *en passant*. The occurrences of the same position do not need to be consecutive or even close together.

To claim a draw by repetition of position, a player must pause the clock and make the claim either immediately before or immediately after making the move that causes the position to repeat. If any move is played by either player after the position repeats, a draw claim 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:

- demonstrating a perpetual check, which is a situation where one player can force the repetition of the same moves to keep the opponent in check; or
- demonstrating the occurrences from his or her scoresheet. If this scoresheet is incomplete or inaccurate so that the repetition of position cannot be demonstrated, the draw claim will not be upheld. The player making the claim is not permitted to use the opponent's scoresheet to help prove the claim.

- *50-Move Rule:* If both players make 50 consecutive moves without moving any pawn and without capturing any piece, then either player may claim that the game is a draw unless the last move played results in checkmate. This series of 50 moves can begin at any point during the game, 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.

8. Forfeits

A player who has been paired against an opponent forfeits the game if he or she does not arrive at the board before a stipulated amount of time expires. Unless otherwise indicated, this time is the lesser of 60 minutes or one half of the first time control. Players who forfeit will be withdrawn from the tournament.

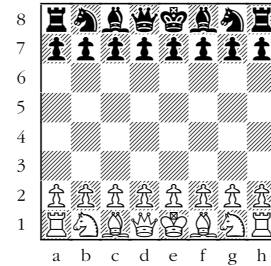
A player who abandons a game in progress likewise forfeits. A player abandons a game if he or she (1) begins the game by making at least one move, (2) leaves the board and does not return for the duration of the round, and (3) did not resign or accept a draw offer before leaving the board.

Any player withdrawn from the tournament because of a forfeit may be readmitted to the tournament upon request at the sole discretion of the chief tournament director.

Part III: 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 of 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:
- Check is indicated by “+” written at the end of the move, double check by “++”, and checkmate by a “#”; for example, Qa4+, Nh3++, Rd8#.
 - 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.
 - 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.
 - 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:
- 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.
 - When *either player* has five minutes or less of time remaining, *both players* are excused from the requirement to record further moves.
 - 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.)

	<i>White</i>	<i>Black</i>		<i>White</i>	<i>Black</i>
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

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

15.	Kg1	Qh5 ??
16.	Qxh5 !?	Nf3+
17.	Kg2	Ne1++ !!
18.	Kg1	

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.	cxb4	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

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

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#