



Guide to the Rules & Etiquette of Chess Competition

The following is a quick guide to the rules and etiquette of chess competition. Citations are made, by section number (§ = section) to the U.S. Chess Federation's Official Rules of Chess (6th edition)

Conduct During the Game

- Players shall Participate in the spirit of fair play and good sportsmanship (§20A)
- During the game players should never discuss their game with anyone (§20I), solicit or use advice (§20E), make use recorded matter (§20B), or analyze a game in progress (§20D).
- It is forbidden to distract or annoy your opponent or other players (§20G).
- When the tournament director announces that it is time to start the clocks, it is proper to first shake hands and then the player with the black pieces starts White's clock (§16I).
- To resign a game a player should say I resign and tip over his/her king (§13B).
- Draw offers should occur after a player moves and before pressing the clock. The opponent may accept the proposal or may reject it. The player who made the offer cannot withdraw it (§14B1).
- If a draw offer is made before moving, the opponent may accept or reject the offer or require the player who made the offer to move before deciding to accept or reject the offer (§14B3).
- When a game is completed the result must be immediately reported in the manner required by the Tournament Director. Both players are responsible for registering results. If they do not do so, they may each be penalized. (§15H).

Recording of Games

- Both players are required to record the game (both player's and the opponent's moves) on a scoresheet. Algebraic notation is standard (§15A).
- Players unable to take score due to physical handicaps/religious reasons may be excused or have assistance (§15A1).
- If either player has less than five minutes remaining, both players are allowed to stop keeping score (= recording moves on score sheet). On the other hand, one may continue to keep score if one wishes (§15C)

- Players without a properly filled out scoresheet may make it impossible to claim a draw by triple occurrence (§14C) or the 50-move rule (§14F)
- Only header information, recording moves, draw offers, clock times, and result of the game are permitted to be written on score sheet, one is not allowed to make notes or write down chess analysis. (§20C).

The Use of the Chess Clock

- Digital clocks preferable in sudden death (§42D).
- Players are responsible for knowing how to set their own clocks (§16B2c).
- Players must remove their hands from the clock after depressing the button (§16C).
- Each player must operate the clock with the same hand that moves the pieces (§16C1).
- Only the players of the game are allowed to call attention to a fallen flag (or time expired) on their clocks (§13C1). A director should never initiate a time-forfeit claim (§3C1).
- If your flag falls and your opponent has insufficient material to win, the game is a draw (§14E1)
- If a player claims that both flags are down (while they are indeed down), prior to a checkmate, the game is drawn (§14G1).
- Only after both flags have fallen, a director is allowed to rule the game as drawn in order to avoid delaying the tournament (§14G2).

Request for Ruling

- A player has the right to stop both clocks to ask a Tournament Director to rule upon a point of law, procedure, or conduct (§21F).
- A player should immediately stop both clocks and summon a Tournament Director. In most cases, a player who defers such a claim waives the right to make the claim (§21F1).
- A player may appeal any rule made by a Tournament Director, provided that appeal is made within one-half hour and before the player resumes play. The Tournament Director may require that the appeal be made in writing (§21H1).
- The Tournament Director may reserve a decision temporarily and direct play to continue (§21H2).

Swiss Pairing Rules

- The Swiss system was proposed by Julius Müller and first used in a chess tournament at Zurich, Switzerland, in 1895.
- Can be used for teams or individuals.
- The higher the ratio of rounds to players, the more accurate the results.
- Determines the strongest players and the eventual winner as fast and as fair as possible.
- A player should not play against the same opponent more than once in a tournament (§27A1).
- Players with equal scores should be paired against each other if possible (§27A2).

- Players are ranked from highest to lowest rating within a score group then split into two halves. The top player from the first half of the list is paired against the top player from the second half; the no. 2 player from the first half is paired against the no. 2 player from the second half, and so on through the last players in each half (§27A3).
- In the first-round a color is assigned to the odd-numbered players in the upper half by lot and the opposite color is given to all the even-numbered players in the upper half (§29E2).
- As many players as possible are given their color due [alternating colors] in each succeeding round (§27A5 & §29E3).
- Players receive each color the same number of times, whenever practical, and are not assigned the same color more than twice in a row. (§27A4). The equalization of color takes priority over alteration of colors (§29E4).
- If both players have had the same color sequence, the higher-ranked player gets color due (§29E4).
- Transposition and interchanges of players is allowed for the purpose of maximizing the number of players who receive their color due (§29E5a) or for minimizing the number of players who receive one color two or more times (§29Eb).
- Unplayed games, including byes and forfeits, do not count for color (§29E1)
- Tournament Director may assign rating for unrated (§28D5 & 28D6) and rated players (§28E).
- If there are an odd number of players for a round, one player will receive a full-point bye (§22B).
- Full-point bye is given to the lowest-rated player in the lowest score group (§28L2).
- A full-point bye must not be given more than once, nor should one be awarded to a player who has won an unplayed game (§28L3).

Team Tie-break Systems

- **IHSA.** For each match played, multiply a team's match points plus ten (10), by one (1) plus the square of the opponent's tournament points, divided by one hundred (100); then add these points for each round played in the tournament.
- **US AMATEUR.** For each round, the tiebreak points are the final score of the opposing team multiplied by the number of points scored against that team.
- **PERFORMANCE INDEX.**
- **GAME/MATCH POINT.** Total game points earned by a team.

Individual Tie-break Systems

- **MODIFIED MEDIAN.** First, compute the adjusted score of each opponent played by counting each unplayed game (bye, forfeit, round not played after a withdrawal) as 1/2 a point. If the player involved in the tie has any unplayed games (byes, forfeits, unplayed

rounds), those games count as opponents with an adjusted score of zero. Next, discard ineligible adjusted scores as specified. Players with plus scores have the lowest opponent's adjusted score dropped. Players with even scores have the highest and lowest opponent's adjusted scores dropped. Players with minus scores have the highest opponent's adjusted score dropped. Then add the remaining adjusted scores to determine the player's tiebreak points (§34E1).

- **SOLKOFF.** Add the adjusted scores of all opponents (same as Modified Median except no scores discarded) (§34E2).
- **CUMULATIVE.** Add the scores after each round; subtract one point for each one-point bye or forfeit win. Example: A player has a bye in round 1, wins in 2, loses in 3, draws in 4, wins in 5. The cumulative tie break score is $1 + 2 + 2 + 2 \frac{1}{2} + 3 \frac{1}{2} - 1 = 10$ (§34E3).
- **OPPONENTS CUMULATIVE** (§34E9).
- **SONNENBORN-BERGER.** Add the adjusted scores of each opponent defeated, plus half the adjusted scores of each opponent drawn (§34E8).