

# TOURNAMENT RULES

(Additional Tournament Rules Appear In The Official USCF Rule Book, 6th Edition)

1. To find out where you are supposed to play, look at the yellow pairing sheets. The number at the FAR LEFT-HAND side is the number of the board where you play (DON'T CONFUSE THIS WITH THE NUMBER NEXT TO YOUR NAME—THIS IS YOUR PLAYER NUMBER ON THE TOURNAMENT WALLCHART, NOT YOUR BOARD NUMBER). Go to your board and MAKE SURE you are playing the right person, and make sure you know who is playing White and Black. You may not start your opponent's clock without first setting up a board and pieces. AS SOON AS YOUR GAME IS OVER, both players should go to the results table and report your result (the 2-Day Championship sections may have the sheets posted on the display boards). Write a "1" to the left of the name of the person who won and a "0" by the person's name who lost, or "1/2" by each name for a draw. **BOTH PLAYERS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR DOING THIS.** Players who do not report the results of their game may find themselves not paired for the next round, and may also cause their whole team to lose tiebreak points.

2. IF YOUR OPPONENT HAS NOT SHOWN UP AFTER 30 MINUTES (or after 60 minutes in the 2-Day Championship Sections), write "1F" to the left of your name and "0F" to the left of your opponent's name. ONLY WRITE "F" (forfeit) IF YOUR OPPONENT DOES NOT SHOW UP AT ALL.

*DO NOT CHANGE ANYTHING WRITTEN ON THE YELLOW SHEET WITHOUT TD'S PERMISSION!*

3. Each player has 30 minutes for the entire game plus *a 5-second delay* each move (*except the 2-Day Championship Sections play Game/60 minutes with 10-second delay*). Non-delay clocks should also be set to Game/30 (or Game/60 in the 2-Day Sections). Players are responsible for supplying their own clocks. If you don't have a clock, ask if you can borrow one from another player or start without one. Later, when other games finish, you can ask to borrow one of their clocks, and then subtract half of the elapsed time from each player's clock. Time delay clocks are now standard equipment and preferred over non-delay clocks. Black has the choice of equipment if she has standard equipment. If not, the Director may rule which equipment is more standard. If Black is late and White has already set up, then White obtains this choice. However, if the opponent is not using a time delay clock, then either player may substitute his own delay clock for the opponent's non-delay clock, if the player has not yet made a move. A player who is late who wishes to do this must also absorb any elapsed time on her own clock. Clocks with incorrect delay settings may be corrected by TD, but after Black's 10th move a game using a clock set without a delay or with an incorrect delay will continue unless corrected by the TD.

4. A player can claim a win on time when her opponent's flag falls. The clock should not beep or halt (the penalty for incorrectly set clocks is at TD's discretion) and your own flag must still be up. To claim a win on time if your opponent does not concede, pause the clock to get the Tournament Director. DO NOT DESTROY THE POSITION WITHOUT CHECKING WITH THE TOURNAMENT DIRECTOR— you may destroy your claim as well! You must also have enough pieces left on the board to be able to force checkmate (mating material) to claim a win on time. You cannot win on time with a lone King, a lone Bishop, a lone Knight or two lone Knights, with no Pawns.

5. If a player makes an illegal move and presses her clock, two minutes are added to her opponent's clock, if the opponent has not already determined another move. The player must also move the piece that she originally touched, if possible. If an illegal move was made, the position may be put back to what it was before the illegal move, providing that it can be shown that less than ten moves have been made since the illegal move occurred. **Exception:** if it's pointed out during the game that any pieces were not on their correct squares at the start, those pieces may be placed on their correct starting squares, if none of those pieces has already moved. A player is supposed to use the same hand to move the pieces and press the clock, **EXCEPT** two hands may be used when capturing, castling or promoting a Pawn.

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6. **Both players are supposed to write down the moves for each player, move by move**, until either player has less than five minutes left on his clock. Inexperienced players may be excused from scorekeeping, but ***a player who is not writing down the moves loses 5 minutes off her clock*** at the start of the game in the Non-Championship sections (**10 minutes off in the Championship Sections**) IF her opponent is keeping score. **Exception:** If either player is in 1st grade or below, scorekeeping is not required with no penalty. All claims of opponents not keeping score must be made before the game ends and before either player has less than five minutes remaining.

7. If a player has under two minutes ***and with NO time delay***, she may stop the clocks **on her turn** to move to get the Tournament Director, and claim a draw by “insufficient losing chances,” **which is also an offer of a draw**. If the player has no reasonable chances to lose the position on the board, the Director may declare the game a draw. If it can be shown that the opponent does have reasonable chances to win, the game continues, and the player will lose up to one minute on her clock, possibly causing an immediate loss by time forfeit, for making an invalid draw claim. In close calls, the Director may rule no time penalty, and transfer the game to a time delay clock, with the player making the claim continuing with half her remaining time deducted. **Note:** a position with insufficient losing chances is **much more** than a “book draw.” The USCF standard is that the position must be so clear that a Class C player would reasonably be expected to hold a Master to at least a draw, if both players had ample time. Some examples of valid claims of insufficient losing chances are Queen & King vs. the same or King & Rook vs. the same (unless a forced win can be shown), King & Pawn vs. King, if he defender has the Opposition, King & Bishop vs. King & Bishop of opposite color (with Pawns blockaded), etc. However, **most positions**, such as King, Rook & three Pawns vs. the same, even though they may be drawn with correct play, would probably not be so clear as to offer “insufficient losing chances.” Once your flag falls, it is too late to claim “insufficient losing chances.”

8. To claim a draw if the EXACT same position is about to happen for the third time, by the Fifty Move Rule, etc., it may be necessary to have evidence (an impartial witness or a score sheet). If you have stopped keeping score, you may resume scorekeeping to make a future claim. **Draw claims are also draw offers**, and must be made while the player making the claim is on move, before her flag falls.

9. TO MAKE A CLAIM OF ANY KIND, or in the event of a problem, either player may stop the clocks and get the Tournament Director. If you don't stop the clocks while waiting for a Director, you will lose time.

10. If your opponent does something incorrect during the game, ***BE SURE to tell the Tournament Director right away!*** It's often too late to complain about something the opponent did after the game ends. An appeal of a TD ruling must be made to the Chief Floor Director before the tournament ends.

11. To castle properly, you should move your King first. However, there is no penalty for moving the Rook first.

12. If both players are due to play the same color, the players are assigned the color opposite to the color they had in the most recent round in which their colors differed. For players with identical color histories, the player with more points gets the color she is due. If both have the same score, the higher-rated player gets her due color (except assigning the same color for three consecutive games is avoided). Players from the same school will not be paired against each other if it's possible to make other legal pairings. It may be necessary to pair players with low scores with players who have different scores, in order to avoid pairing players from the same school together. Score has priority over color in determining pairings, and color totals (equalization) has priority over color alternation.

13. The game is between two players. If teammates or coaches interfere in the games, ***the entire team may be penalized!***

**14. CHESS IS SUPPOSED TO BE FUN!** It's not the end of the world if you lose a game. EVERYBODY loses games! It's more important to get experience playing in tournaments and in exercising your mind than it is to worry about losing a game. If you should lose, play over your game and see where you could have improved (use your score sheet) and try harder next time!