

New York State Girls' Championship Rules (Updated 9/15/2026)

(More Rules Appear In The USCF Rulebook And Also Apply)

1. HOW TO FIND YOUR GAME

To find where you are supposed to be, look at the **yellow pairing sheets**. The left-most number on the pairing sheet is the number of the board where you will play. **Do not confuse this with the number right before your name--** that is your player number in the tournament, not your board number. Double check the pairing chart to make sure of your board number, and look to see your opponent's name, and what color you're playing. Before you start your game, ask your opponent her name and **make sure you are playing the right person!**

2. When your game ends, MAKE SURE YOU AND YOUR OPPONENT BOTH AGREE ON THE RESULT!

If you don't agree on the result, GET THE TOURNAMENT DIRECTOR. If you both agree on the final result, reset the pieces and leave the room (**never reset the pieces if there is a question or a disagreement when the game ends--** by destroying the position, you may be penalized-- even given a loss for the game). K-3 and K1 Sections report their results to the Director **before** resetting the pieces, unless there is a result table set up for them to report their results instead.

As soon as your game ends, both players should sign each other's notation sheets and then also write the result of the game on the yellow pairing sheet, (write a "1" next to the winner's name, and a "0" next to the player's name who lost; if the game was drawn, write "½" next to each player's name). **DO NOT CHANGE ANYTHING WRITTEN ON THE YELLOW SHEET WITHOUT THE TD's PERMISSION!** The K-3 and K1 Sections will record their result with the Director.

Be sure your game result is promptly posted on the yellow pairing sheet!

It doesn't matter whether you won or lost the game-- you are responsible for making sure that the correct result is reported. If the result of your game is not reported in time to make the next round's pairings, you might find that you and your opponent are **both** not paired for the next round! In addition, both players and their teams may be penalized tie-break points (so make sure you and your teammates have marked all their results). **Do not write anything** on the white tournament wallcharts-- only Directors write on these charts. Errors in results which are not reported to the Director before the end of the tournament might not be corrected afterwards. After you have reported your game result, go to a skittles or team room if you wish to analyze, talk, play speed chess, etc.

3. SPECTATORS ARE NOT ALLOWED IN THE TOURNAMENT ROOMS WHEN GAMES ARE IN PROGRESS

4. HOW TO FIND A TOURNAMENT DIRECTOR

If you have a question or problem of any kind during your game, **tell the Tournament Director immediately.** There are two ways to do this:

Standard Method: When it is your move, quietly say you are calling a Director, pause both sides of the clock, and go to the nearest Tournament Director. The Tournament Directors wear brightly colored "Tournament Director" shirts.

Other Method: When it is your move, pause both sides of the clock, raise your hand, and wait for a Director to come to your board. However, if you don't see a Director heading in your direction, you should go and get one.

5. IF YOU DON'T PAUSE THE CLOCK

If you have a problem, complaint or question and you need the Tournament Director, but if you don't pause the clocks, there is no penalty, except that you will probably lose whatever time goes by while you are getting the Tournament Director.

6. GET THE DIRECTOR IMMEDIATELY, OR IT MAY BE TOO LATE

If you have a problem or disagreement in your game, **get the Tournament Director!** It's usually too late to make a claim or a complaint about something your opponent was (or wasn't) doing, after the game ends, or even after you continue playing. If you believe that the Tournament Director's decision does not agree with the Tournament Rules, **you should immediately inform the Chief Floor Director.** An appeal of a floor TD ruling must be made before the round ends unless the TD extends this deadline.

7. LEAVING THE ROOM DURING THE GAME

Players may leave the room during play to use the restroom; no permission is necessary. However, players must not analyze their games while outside the room **and may not have cell phones with them.** You may be penalized for long unexcused absences from the room (15 minutes or more).

8. DO NOT DISCUSS YOUR GAME WITH OTHERS

Chess is a game between two (2) players. Do not consult with anyone-- including your team captain or coach-- about whether your position is good enough to offer or accept a draw (or how good your position looks), what move to make, etc.--- it's your own decision! ***If teammates, captains, or coaches interfere in the games, the entire team may be penalized!***

9. TIME LIMIT, SETTING CLOCKS

In the 1-Day sections, each player has 30 minutes for the entire game plus *a 5-second delay* each move. *The K-3, K-6 and Open Championship Sections play Game/60 minutes with a 10-second delay* (G/60, d10). If delay clocks are not available, non-delay clocks should also be set to the same base time control. Time delay clocks are now standard equipment and preferred over non-delay clocks. Clocks with incorrect delay/increment 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.

10. IF YOU HAVE NO CLOCK

Players are responsible for supplying their own clocks. If you have no clock, borrow one from another player or buy one from the bookseller. Otherwise, start without one; try to borrow one from games which finish early (subtract half the elapsed time from each side). However, if a game without a clock is going too slowly, the Director may put a clock on, splitting the elapsed time. This might put both players in immediate time pressure (for instance, 5 minutes each for the rest of the game).

11. HOW TO BEGIN THE GAME IF OPPONENT IS NOT THERE AT THE ROUND TIME

If White is absent, Black should start White's clock when the round begins. If Black is absent, White should play her move and then start Black's clock. If your opponent is late, you may not get a time advantage without first setting up the pieces and starting the clock.

12. IF BOTH PLAYERS ARE LATE

If both players are late, the first to arrive should split the elapsed time before starting the clock. *For example*, if you are 10 minutes late and your opponent has not yet arrived, take 5 minutes off each clock. If this is not done, the times stand unless later adjusted by a Director.

13. NO-SHOW FORFEIT WINS AND HOW TO REPORT THEM

If your opponent's clock runs for one hour and she does not show up, you may claim a win on forfeit. **Post a "no-show" forfeit win as "1F - 0F"** on the yellow pairing sheet. **Don't forget to write "F"**-- it's important, because **a player who does not show up without telling the Director before the pairings are made may be removed from the tournament!**

14. HOW TO CLAIM A WIN ON TIME

To claim a win on time, stop the clock and state your claim. If your opponent does not immediately resign, get a Tournament Director. Your flag must still be up to claim a win on time. **Always post a win on time as "1-0" or "0-1."** **DO NOT WRITE THE "F" if you both played the game and you won or lost your game on time.**

15. PLAYERS MUST CALL THEIR OPPONENTS' FLAGS DOWN

You do not need to tell a Director that your opponent is low on time, because Directors do not call flags down— **only the player must call the opponent's flag down** . Stop both clocks as soon as your opponent's flag falls so your own flag can't fall too.

16. MATING MATERIAL IS REQUIRED TO WIN ON TIME

To win on time, you must have enough material to force checkmate. You cannot win on time with just a lone Bishop, a lone Knight, or just two Knights (no pawns).

17. IF BOTH FLAGS ARE DOWN IN A SUDDEN DEATH GAME, either play may immediately make a claim of a draw to the Tournament Director.

18. WHEN YOU MUST KEEP SCORE

Both players are required to write down all the moves of the game, move by move. Scorekeeping is required until either player has less than five minutes left on her clock. It doesn't have to be perfect but **it is very important that you write down the moves-- it shows what happened in your game!** Mistakes in keeping score cannot alone change the position on the board.

To require your opponent to keep score, see the Tournament Director. Players who do not keep score even after being told by the Director may receive a time penalty, possibly causing them to lose the game. *Inexperienced* young players *may* be excused from writing down the moves-- but if you don't write down the moves, you'll have a big problem if there is a disagreement about what happened in your game. **ALSO NOTE: If a player is not writing down the moves in a 2-Day Section, the TD may deduct 10 MINUTES (or more) OFF HER CLOCK, AND POSSIBLY AN ADDITIONAL PENALTY (5 minutes are deducted in the One-Day sections, but she cannot end up with less than 5 minutes for the game), if her opponent is keeping score.** If both players are not keeping score, they may each receive a time deduction or additional penalty, at the Director's discretion. **EXCEPTION: If either player is in 1st grade or below, scorekeeping is not required by either player, with no time deduction.** If your opponent is not writing down the moves, you must tell the Director before the game ends or before either player has less than 5 minutes left.

19. CLAIM OF "INSUFFICIENT LOSING CHANCES"

If it is **your move** and you have **less than 2 minutes left** and **you are NOT using a time-delay or increment clock**, you may stop both clocks and claim a draw by "Insufficient Losing Chances." This is much different than a "book draw." It requires a position where a **Class C player** (rated about 1500) **would be given a 90% chance to avoid losing against a Master** (about 2300), if both players have lots of time. You can usually draw with King & Queen vs. King & Queen (no other pieces), King & Rook vs. King & Rook, many opposite color Bishop endings, King & Pawn vs. King with the defending King having the Opposition, etc. The preferred option is to insert a time delay clock per the procedure described below. A position like Rook & Pawns vs. Rook & Pawns, for example, even if "drawn" with best play, would probably give a Master too many chances to outplay a C-player, so this claim may be denied. *Claims of "Insufficient Losing Chances" are not considered in games using time delay or increment.* If your flag is down, it's too late to claim Insufficient Losing Chances.

20. PROCEDURE AND PENALTY FOR INCORRECT CLAIM OF "INSUFFICIENT LOSING CHANCES"

If your claim of "Insufficient Losing Chances" is denied, up to 1 minute may be deducted from your clock, *possibly causing you to lose the game on time* (if it's a close call, the Director may deny the claim without a time penalty). If it is unclear if the position has reasonable losing chances, the Director may insert a time-delay clock. The player making the claim continues with half her time (but no more than 1 minute), the opponent keeps all her time, and both get a 5-second grace period before each move. No more "Insufficient Losing Chances" rulings are needed, as players who move in under 5 seconds use up no time on their clocks. **NOTE: No one may "claim" a delay clock--** this clock is only a Director option for resolving claims.

21. SETTING AND HANDLING THE CLOCK AND PIECES

Don't touch the clock when it's not your move, pick up the clock (unless it's not working), or bang the clock. You may be penalized, at the Director's discretion. Both players must hit the clock with the same hand used to move the pieces. Players may use two hands when capturing, castling or promoting a Pawn, however. Clocks should **not** be set to half or beep when time expires (a penalty may be assessed at TD's discretion).

22. TOUCH-MOVE

The Touch Move Rule is always used. If you deliberately touch your piece to make a move in your game with that piece, you must move it if possible, unless you **first** warn your opponent that you are only adjusting the piece. If you deliberately touch your opponent's piece to make a capture, you must capture it if possible. Pieces accidentally knocked down, brushed over or otherwise accidentally displaced need not be moved. When castling, you are supposed to touch the King first, but there is no penalty if you touch the Rook first..

23. ILLEGAL MOVES

If you make an illegal move and press the clock, two minutes are added to your opponent's time, if the opponent has not already completed another move. Touch-Move also applies. If an illegal move already happened, the position may be put back to the way it was right before the move was made (but the time on the clocks is unchanged), if it can be shown that less than 10 moves have been made since the illegal move happened. **Exception:** if it's pointed out after Move 10 that any pieces were not on the right squares at the start of the game, those pieces **may** be placed on their correct starting squares, at TD's discretion, if none of those pieces has moved yet.

24. THE 50-MOVE RULE

If 50 moves (no exceptions) by **each side** go by with no capture and no pawn move, either player may claim a draw.

25. THE SAME POSITION HAPPENS THREE TIMES

You may claim a draw if the position now on the board has appeared for the third time, or if you are about to play a move which will make the same position happen for the third time (any 3 *identical* positions in the game-- they do **not** have to be 3 times in a row). **All** the pieces for both sides must be in the same place each time (with the same player on move). To make a claim, it must be your move. Write and state the move you will play to make the same position happen for the third time and pause the clocks. If your opponent disagrees, get the Director. **Don't complete the move by pressing the clock**, or it will be your opponent's move and you cannot claim. Your scoresheet must show how the same position happened 3 times (things written after the claim is made may not count). If under 5 minutes in the 1-Day Sections, the Director may also use observation. If your claim is denied, your opponent gets 2 more minutes. In unclear situations, Director may deny claim with no penalty.

26. WHICH CLOCK AND SET TO USE

See above for definition of standard clocks. Black has the choice of equipment to use if she arrives on time and **if** she has standard equipment. If Black is late and White has already set up, then White has this choice; however, a player may substitute her standard clock for a non-standard clock if she has not yet made her first move and absorbs her elapsed time. **Players are responsible for setting their clocks correctly!** If neither player has standard equipment, the Director will rule in favor of the equipment more commonly used at tournaments. Any equipment which might be supplied by the tournament is considered to be preferred for use in any such games.

27. NOT PLAYING NEXT ROUND? YOU MUST TELL DIRECTOR IN ADVANCE!

If you won't play next round, please give the Director about one hour notice. ***Players who don't show up for their games and cause their opponents to win by forfeit, may be removed from the tournament!***

28. ABANDONED GAMES

It is improper to leave a lost game and not come back without resigning; players doing so may be penalized at the Director's discretion. Director may rule on ridiculous positions, especially if a player disappears or seems to be ignoring the game.

29. COLOR ASSIGNMENT

If both players are due for the same color, they are usually assigned the opposite color they each had in the most recent round their color histories differed. If they both have the same color history, the player with more points gets the due color. If both players have the same color history and the same score, the higher rated gets due color (players do not "toss" for color). Balancing the number of Whites vs. Blacks is more important than alternating colors. The players' scores are more important than the colors in making the pairings and ***it is not uncommon for players to receive the same color they had in their previous game.*** The same color three times in a row is usually avoided (but 3-in-a-row might be necessary to prevent players from the same school from otherwise being paired, for example).

30. SAME-SCHOOL PAIRINGS

We will try to avoid pairing players from the same school. Where such pairings may occur in sections with team prizes, players from the same school will not be paired together, unless one or both are in the top score groups (sometimes this is also the case in the bottom score groups as well) and no other legal pairings are possible in that score group.

31. INDIVIDUAL TIE-BREAKING

Cash prizes are split if tied. For individual non-cash (indivisible) awards the following tiebreak systems will be used:

1. Modified Median Tiebreaks (add the scores of your opponents, disregarding the least significant (usually the lowest-scoring opponent); any games unplayed by your opponent are adjusted to count as a ½-point). If still tied,
2. Solkoff Tiebreaks (add adjusted scores of all opponents),
3. Cumulative Tiebreaks (add your cumulative scores after each round),
4. Cumulative of Opposition (sum of the cumulative tiebreaks of all your opponents),
5. Game/10 or Game/5 or similar playoff (this is the only method used to break 6-0 perfect score ties).

In extreme circumstances the TD may use a different tiebreak system if the above systems do not work.

32. TEAM TIE-BREAKING

For team awards (the 3 top-scoring players from the same school, minimum of 2 needed for a team), the following tiebreak systems will be used:

1. Cumulative (sum of the team's three top scoring players' cumulative tiebreaks),
2. Median (sum of the Modified Median tiebreaks of the team's three top scorers),
3. Solkoff (sum of the team's three top scorers' Solkoff tiebreaks),
4. Game/10 or Game/5 or similar playoff (this is the only method used to break 24-0 perfect team score ties).

33. ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Cell phones and devices with communication capability **must be turned COMPLETELY OFF** for the entire game. **The devices must be put in a bag or case under the table or a designated cell phone holding area, and must remain there if a player leaves the room.** Penalties may be a loss of time or even a forfeit loss (also see: <http://www.chesstour.com/devices.htm>). ***Use of ChessNoteR electronic devices is also prohibited*** (requests for exceptions based on medical/accessibility issues, with supporting documentation, must be made in advance of the tournament).

34. 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 could have improved* (use your scoresheet to play over the game), and try harder next time-- **there will be other games!**

But even if you lose, please don't forget to record your result!