

Tournament Rules

All rules referenced below refer to the
USCF Official Rules of Chess, 4th Edition, as amended.

- 1. Who is allowed in the tournament playing hall.** Only players with games in progress and designated tournament officials are allowed in the playing hall during games. Coaches, parents and other advisors may assist players, if necessary, in finding their boards and/or obtaining clocks, but they must leave the playing area when the games begin, or at the discretion of the Section Chief Tournament Director (TD).
- 2. Tournament Directors (TDs).** Only those individuals specifically appointed as Directors and Assistants for this may act in that capacity.
- 3. Kibitzing.** No one other than a designated TD or Assistant TD may intervene in a game. Any advisor with a concern about a game or player should contact a TD. If a player needs to communicate with anyone other than his/her opponent or a TD, he/she must contact a TD, who must be present during the conversation. Any communication by a player with someone other than an opponent or TD may be grounds for forfeiture of the game or expulsion from the tournament, depending on the severity of the offense (See rule 10).
- 4. Photography.** Please avoid flash photography if possible. Photographs are allowed only before the beginning of each round. (Only official tournament staff and/or news media approved by tournament staff will be allowed to take photographs at other times; they will do so as unobtrusively as possible).
- 5. Pairings and Wall Charts.** For this tournament all posted tournament charts will use the following color code system:
 - **Kindergarten Section** - Grey
 - **Primary Sections** - Fuchsia
 - **Elementary Sections** - Blue
 - **Middle School Sections** - Green
 - **High School Sections** - Red
 - **Collegian Section** - YellowShortly before each round, a pairing list of game assignments will be posted for each section. In addition, team-pairing sheets will be available for the championship and JV section of each section. After each round is completed, TDs will post an updated, cumulative cross table showing the results of each round. Players, coaches, and parents should check these charts for accuracy. In case of suspected errors, notify Tournament Headquarters immediately, providing as much documentation/verification as possible (score sheets, opposing players, witnesses, etc.).
- 6. Pairing Software.** Swiss Sys Version 5.07 will be used. Pairings created by this program are considered legal and may stand even if a pairing is not ideal. This is especially true if pairings have been posted.
- 7. Byes.** If we have an odd number of players in a section, one player will be assigned a bye for the round. The computer-pairing program (Swiss-Sys) will determine who is to receive the bye, using official USCF pairing rules. The player will be noted on the pairing sheet and will receive a full point for that round. Players receiving a bye should report to the Section TD at the microphone prior to the beginning of the round. The section TD may assign this player to a game if an opponent becomes available (because of no-shows, pairing errors, etc). No player will receive more than 1 such bye during the course of the tournament. Full points are only given when the computer pairing system assigns the bye. Players who request a bye in advance will receive 0.5 points for the first missed round and 0 points for any additional missed rounds.
- 8. Dress.** Any player appearing without a shirt, with a bare midriff, or in wet clothing will be sent out to change while his/her clock runs.
- 9. Behavior.** Players must be quiet in the tournament room while games are in progress. They should not engage in any behavior that is distracting to other players. All games in the tournament room are official tournament games; no practice games or skittles will be allowed in the tournament room. All players, coaches and parents are expected to exhibit good sportsmanship and courtesy at all times.
- 10. Food and Beverages.** Food and beverages are not permitted in the tournament room. **Exception:** plain water in a closed container is allowed, only if it is tightly closed immediately after each use and is never placed on the playing table.

11. **How to find a TD.** During play, if you have a claim, complaint, or question of any kind, quietly tell your opponent that you are calling a TD, stop both clocks and raise your hand. A TD will come and assist you. Clocks must be kept running at all times, except when calling a TD.
12. **To make a claim.** Call a TD immediately. Claims about positions or situations no longer in existence on the board generally cannot be considered.
13. **If you do not stop the clock.** If you fail to stop both clocks while making a claim, you will lose whatever time elapses on your clock during the process.
14. **When your game is over.** When you and your opponent agree that the game has ended, shake hands, fill out the Results Sheet (see sample below), and raise your hand to wait for a TD, who will confirm the results of the game and initial your Results Sheet. Results agreed upon are binding, be sure that you clearly state what you are agreeing to (win, loss or draw). With your opponent, go to the Results Table outside the playing room. The person at the Results Table must verify the results of your game by asking both you and your opponent about the outcome of the game. Do not talk to anyone else until the results are turned in. Players leaving the area without turning in their results will be scored as a double forfeit. You must have your opponent with you when you turn in your results. Please take all personal items with you when you leave the tournament hall since you will not be allowed to re-enter the room. A TD may only retrieve items left at the table.

Region VIII Reporting Form		
Board Number _____	TD Initials _____	
White _____		
Black _____		
Round _____	<u>Circle the result below:</u>	
White Won	Draw	Black Won
Did your opponent show up? Yes / No		

15. **Leaving the room during play.** Players may leave the room briefly (for restroom, etc.) without asking permission from a TD, but you must tell your opponent you are doing so. During your absence, your opponent may make his or her move and start your clock. You

may **NOT** discuss or analyze your game, nor consult any written material, notes, your coach, your parents, or your teammates while away from your board. While your game is still being played, speaking to anyone about anything can raise suspicion. If you are going to be gone from your board for more than 10 minutes, notify a TD.

16. **Setting the clocks.** Time controls and appropriate clock settings are listed below. The JV sections should deduct 5 minutes when using the time delay feature. The championship sections should not deduct any time for the time-delay feature. Set time-delay clocks for a 5-second delay. If your opponent does not understand your digital clock or the delay mode, you must explain the operation of the clock and the delay mode before the game begins. Use of the delay mode will restrict both players' ability to claim an Insufficient Losing Chances draw. See rule 29.

Time Control	Setting for Analog Clocks	Setting for Digital Clocks
Game/30	5:30	30 minutes
Game/35	5:25	35 minutes
Game/40	5:20	40 minutes
Game/45	5:15	45 minutes
Game/50	5:10	50 minutes
Game/60	5:00	1:00 or 60 minutes

17. **Preferred clocks.** Generally, the player of the black pieces has the choice of which players' clock will be used. However, if either player has a digital clock with a time-delay feature, and he/she wishes to use it, the game must be played in the time-delay mode with that clock. If you have a delay capable clock, you must use the delay. Digital clocks that do not have a time delay on it do not have precedence over mechanical clocks and the player of the black pieces will have the choice of clocks.

18. **Placement and use of clocks.** All clocks will be placed so that they are facing a uniform direction as indicated by the tournament director. Do not touch the clock between moves; remove your hand entirely after you depress the button. If either player has less than five minutes of time remaining, both players must depress the clock button with the same hand they use to move the pieces, and neither player is allowed to pick up the clock.

19. **If you have no clock.** If you do not have a clock, try to borrow one from another player. Be sure the clock has his/her name and school on it and that he/she knows your name and school. If you obtain a clock after the game is in progress, have a TD set the clock for you. He or she will divide the elapsed time equally. The tournament staff does not furnish clocks. If a game is moving too slowly and has the potential to delay the beginning of the next round, a tournament director may place a clock at that board, dividing the remaining time equally. This could potentially put both players in immediate time pressure, such as five minutes each.
20. **How to begin if your opponent is absent.** If White is absent, Black should promptly start White's clock when the round begins. If Black is absent, White may start Black's clock without moving or may make one move and then start Black's clock. **Exception:** During the first round of the tournament, Tournament Directors might choose to change the pairings for players with absent opponents, since usually a number of pre-registered players fail to arrive at the tournament. In this case, follow the instructions of the Tournament Directors.
21. **Absent or late opponent.** If your opponent arrives late, you may not obtain a time advantage without starting a clock. If your opponent does not arrive before his/her entire time has elapsed, you may claim a win by forfeit. (Raise your hand when your opponent's flag falls, so a TD can verify that you won by forfeit.) It is important to indicate on the Results Sheet that this game was **un-played**, since the player who forfeited will be withdrawn from the tournament, unless he has an excuse acceptable to the Tournament Director.
22. **If both players arrive late.** If both players are late arriving for the round, raise your hand for a TD to come and set your clock. He or she will divide the elapsed time equally.
23. **Scorekeeping.** Scorekeeping is required in all championship sections, except for Primary and Kindergarten. The TD will subtract 5 minutes for players in any section who do not record their moves.
24. **Recording moves.** Your score sheets are included in this booklet. If both players have more than 5 minutes left on their clocks, both players should record their moves ("keep score"). (Very young players who have not yet learned to keep score may be excused from this requirement.) If either player has less than 5 minutes left, neither player is required to continue keeping score. A completed score sheet is not required to win on time, since all games in this tournament are played at a "sudden death" time control; however, you must have a complete score sheet to claim a draw by repetition or by the 50-move rule, or to challenge such a claim by your opponent. A complete score sheet is defined in the *USCF's Official Rules of Chess*, 4th edition.
25. **Director witnessing illegal move.** There are not enough TDs to watch every game so we are using Variation 11H1 of the rulebook.
- In an event in which most games are not watched by directors, the director may refrain from correcting all illegal moves he or she may notice but simply serve as a witness should one of the payers point out the illegal move before ten more moves have been made.*
26. **Touch-move.** The touch-move rule is always in effect. If you intentionally touch your piece, you must move that piece if it has a legal move. If you intentionally touch your opponent's piece, you must capture that piece if possible. Pieces that are accidentally knocked over, brushed with a palm as you reach for another piece, hit with an elbow, or otherwise inadvertently touched do not need to be moved. If you need to adjust a piece because it is extremely crooked on the board, you must say, "adjust" before you touch the piece. Do this only on your own time, never on your opponent's time. Players are not required to move the piece that they have adjusted in this way.
27. **Castling.** When castling, it is proper to touch the king first. There is no penalty for touching the rook first. However, if castling is illegal, you will have to make another legal move with whichever piece you touched first.
28. **Winning "on time."** To claim a win on time, stop both clocks while your opponent's flag is down and yours is still up (on a digital clock, when your opponent's indicator light is on, and yours is still off) and state your claim to your opponent by saying, "Flag." If your opponent does not immediately agree, call a Tournament Director and show the clock to him or her. You must call your opponent's flag down yourself. No one else can call attention to a flag-fall. If you wait until your flag also falls, the game is drawn, regardless of whose flag fell first.
29. **Mating material needed to win "on time."** To win on time, you must have sufficient material to checkmate. Examples of insufficient mating material are (1) one Bishop and King, (2) one Knight and King, (3) two Knights and King if your opponent has no pawns,

unless there is a forced win. If your opponent runs out of time, but you have insufficient material to checkmate, the game is a draw.

30. **Insufficient Losing Chances.** If it is your move, you have less than 5 minutes remaining on your clock, and your flag is still up, in certain circumstances you may stop both clocks and ask a tournament director to declare the game a draw based upon insufficient losing chances. This is different from a “book draw,” and requires a position in which a Class C player (1500 rating) has a 90% chance of avoiding a loss to a Master (2200 rating) with ample time for both. It is a judgment call by the Tournament Director whether or not to allow the claim. You can claim such a draw with King and Queen vs. King and Queen, King and Rook vs. King and Rook (no other material), in many opposite-color Bishop endings, or if you have an overwhelming material advantage, such as King, Queen, and four Pawns vs. King and a single blocked pawn, (in this case, you would be claiming the draw only because you lack sufficient time to force a checkmate). But a position such as King, Rook, and a Pawn for each side, even if “drawn” in theory, would probably allow a Master too great a chance to outplay a C player, so your claim would likely be denied. If a game is being played using a clock’s time-delay feature, no claims of insufficient losing material will be considered, since a player in such a position should be able to maintain his/her game without running out of time. This game would likely be drawn by the 50-move rule, the threefold repetition rule, or the 175-move limit.
31. **A Tournament Director** has four choices when asked to rule on an insufficient losing chances claim. He/she may (1) declare the game a draw, (2) deny the claim, and if the claim is deemed frivolous or obviously incorrect, deduct one minute from the claimant’s time, (3) if the validity of the claim is uncertain, temporarily deny the claim, making no adjustment of the claimant’s remaining time, and inviting the claimant to make the claim again later, if the opponent is making no progress, (4) if the game is not already being played with a time-delay clock, replace the game clock with a clock set for a 5-second delay, with the time per side adjusted so that the claimant has one-half of his/her remaining time, not to exceed one minute, and the opponent has all his/her time remaining. The game then continues to completion, using the delay mode. *This last method is the preferred choice and will be used during this tournament when possible.*
32. **A claim of insufficient losing chances** is also an offer for a draw, and if the opponent accepts this implied draw offer, the game is drawn.
33. **Illegal moves.** No one other than the players or a Tournament Director may point out an illegal move. Since a tournament director cannot constantly watch most games in this tournament, the director may refrain from correcting illegal moves that he/she notices.
34. **If each player has more than 5 minutes left on the clock**, and if an illegal move is pointed out before each side makes 10 additional moves, the position immediately before the illegal move is reinstated. The clocks are not readjusted in this situation. An illegal move stands if both players make 10 more moves without pointing out the illegal move. If you notice right away that your opponent has made an illegal move, restart his/her clock and allow him/her to take back the illegal move and make a legal one, remembering that touch-move is in effect. If you notice that an illegal move was made more than one move earlier, so that the board will need to be reset, stop both clocks, and call a Tournament Director for help.
35. **During the final 5 minutes on either player’s clock**, an illegal move will be corrected only if it is noticed and brought to the attention of the Tournament Director before 2 additional moves are made by the opponent of the player who made the illegal move. If your opponent makes an illegal move and then starts your clock, stop both clocks and raise your hand for a Tournament Director. Two minutes will be added to your remaining time and your opponent will be required to make another move, with touch-move in effect. (The clock will be adjusted **only** if one of the players is in his/her final 5 minutes.) Do not add the time to your own clock; a Tournament Director must supervise or make the clock adjustment.
36. **Game restarts.** If you notice an incorrect starting position before 10 moves have been made (for example, if the Queen and King were placed on the wrong squares), a TD must restart the game from the correct position. Both clocks should be stopped while you reset the board, and the elapsed time on the clock will stay the same; do not adjust the time on the clock.
37. **The 50-move rule.** If 50 consecutive moves by each side elapse without a capture or a pawn move, either player may claim a draw. This rule does not require a lone King or any other particular material. A correct score sheet record (as defined in the *USCF’s Official Rules of Chess*, 4th edition) is required to make this claim. (If less than 5 minutes remain on either player’s clock, it is acceptable for the players to use a check

mark for each move on the score sheet instead of keeping score.) In the last 5 minutes of either player's time, a director may observe and/or count moves.

38. **Triple occurrence of position.** You may claim a draw if the position on the board has appeared for a third time, or if it is your move and the move you intend to make will cause a position to appear for the third time. "The position" means all pieces and pawns of both sides are on the same squares, with the same castling and en passant rights, and with the same side on the move each time. The moves that occur between the occurrences of the position are irrelevant. It must be your move in order for you to make the claim. Don't make a move and start your opponent's clock, or it will be your opponent's move and you cannot make the claim. Tell your opponent the move you will play, state your claim, and stop both clocks. If your opponent disagrees, raise your hand for a Tournament Director. If your claim is denied because there was no triple repetition, two minutes may be added to your opponent's remaining time. Your score sheet will not need to be complete, but it must be adequate to verify your claim. Moves filled in after you make the claim do not count toward an adequate score sheet. If less than 5 minutes remain on either player's clock, a Tournament Director may also observe the game to verify triple occurrence of position.
39. **Offering a draw.** When offering a draw, use clear wording that cannot be misunderstood. "I offer you a draw," or "Will you accept a draw?" are appropriate ways to make such an offer. Do not simply offer a handshake, since your opponent might interpret that as a resignation. To offer your opponent a draw, make your move on the board, clearly state your draw offer, and then start your opponent's clock. Your opponent can accept your offer until he touches a piece. You cannot retract the draw offer during this time. If he accepts the offer, the game is over. (If he intentionally touches a piece without accepting the draw, the game continues.) Do not continue the game in the tournament room once a draw offer has been accepted. You cannot agree to a draw after the game has already ended for some other reason.
40. **Resigning.** If you choose to resign your game, say "I resign," or tip over your King, then offer a handshake to your opponent. Do not simply offer a handshake, since that can be misinterpreted. Always remember to congratulate your opponent (shake hands and say, "Good game"), since this is a mark of good sportsmanship.
41. **Team captains.** In the final round of the tournament, you may ask your team captain/coach for advice regarding offering or accepting a draw offer **only** if he/she has not been in the tournament room and is not aware of the current or past position of your game. Do not stop the clocks, but summon a Tournament Director to accompany you outside the tournament room to talk to your team captain/coach. You may say nothing to the coach except "Should I offer/accept a draw?" Your coach can only reply "Yes," "No," or "It is your decision." Team captains/coaches may not impose any result; they can only recommend, since each player is responsible for the result of his/her own game.
42. **End of game.** If checkmate or stalemate occurs, a player resigns, or a player accepts a draw offer, the game is over. If a player announces checkmate and the opponent agrees that it is checkmate, the game is over. The decision reached by the players is final and cannot be changed (even if a Tournament Director, spectator, or another player notices that the position was not actually a checkmate or stalemate). A completed game cannot be resumed, even if both players agree. The players should go together to turn in the results sheet at the Results Table to verify that the correct result is recorded.
43. **No Progress.** A Tournament Director who is watching a game may stop the game and declare the game to be drawn if no progress is being made, regardless of the material advantage on the board. (For example, if a player does not know how to achieve a checkmate with the remaining material, and if he/she instead just continues to aimlessly check the opposing King, rather than progressing toward a checkmate.) Such a ruling is a judgment call by the Tournament Director. A player should not ask for such a ruling. Instead he/she should keep a complete score sheet in order to eventually claim a draw by threefold occurrence of position or by the 50-move rule.
44. **Withdrawing or missing a round.** If you will not be playing a round, you must notify the Tournament Director as soon as possible. Do not simply tell one of the Tournament Directors who is working on the tournament floor, since he/she may not be able to leave the tournament room to give the message to those who are preparing the pairings for the next round. You, your coach, or your parent must go to the Tournament Directors' headquarters immediately after you complete the previous round, or earlier if possible. If you find that you will miss the first round of the day, contact the Tournament Directors' headquarters about one hour before the first round begins.

45. **If you fail to give adequate notice** about missing a round, you will be withdrawn from the remainder of the tournament if you do not have an excuse that is acceptable to the Tournament Director, and you could be required to pay a fine.
46. **Tie-breaks.** All players having the same final score may claim the same "place." You may change the plate on your trophy (at your own expense) to reflect this. The following tiebreak system order will be used to determine which tied player receives which trophy. For a description of each of these tiebreak methods, see the *USCF's Official Rules of Chess*, 4th edition. If you want more details about how these tiebreaks are calculated, you may look at a copy of this rulebook in the Tournament Directors' Headquarters, in the Tournament Headquarters. 1. Modified Median 2. Solkoff 3. Sonneborn-Berger 4. Cumulative. 5. Kashdan 6. Most blacks 7. Coin flip.
47. **Team Scores.** Team scores are composed of the total points of the four top-finishing players of the team. A team must have a minimum of two players to be included in the team standings. When team scores are identical, trophies will be decided by totaling the following tiebreaks of the top four players. 1. Cumulative, 2. Solkoff, 3. Sonneborn-Berger, 4. Kasdan, 5. Coin flip
48. **Awards.** Please do not ask Tournament Directors about your chances for a trophy. No awards will be announced until the Awards Ceremony for your section.
49. **Individual Trophies.** Individual trophies will be awarded to the top 15 players in each section, with the exception of the collegiate division whose top 5 players will receive trophies. Tie-breaks will be used when players have the identical scores.
50. **Team Trophies.** Trophies will be awarded to the top 8 teams in each section, with the exception of the collegiate division whose top 3 teams will receive trophies. Tie-breaks will be used when teams have the identical scores.
51. **Team Requirements.** Teams are composed of players who currently attend the same public or private school, or home-schooling students who currently belong to the same local home-school support organization. It is not necessary for a school's chess team to be an official extra-curricular activity of the school. Each school may enter only one team per section. No club teams are allowed in the regional scholastic event. To play as a team, all players must be enrolled as full-time students at the school they are representing. No com-
- bined schools are allowed. If you have questions about who is eligible to play on your team, talk to a tournament director in tournament headquarters.
52. **Medals.** Medals will be awarded to players who finish from 16th-30th place in each section with the exception of the collegian section.
53. **Ribbons.** Participation ribbons will be issued to all participants.