



At Wisconsin Scholastic Chess Federation tournaments, we follow the Official USCF rules of chess. The Official rules are contained in a 370 page book, and every USCF Certified Tournament Director must own a copy. Knowing and understanding the rules is critical for players, coaches, and parents also. If you would like your own copy of “The USCF’s Official Rules of Chess, 5th edition” it is available for purchase online at the [USCF Bookstore](#), and other booksellers such as [Amazon.com](#). You can special order a copy from [Barnes and Noble](#), and the [Milwaukee Public Library](#) system has several copies available.

To make it easier for the players, coaches and parents to understand the rules, we have prepared our own shorter version of the most important rules for players to understand. Our Tournament Rules can be found in the [Tournament Program Booklet](#) available at all of our tournaments. Additional copies of our Program Booklet are available for free at any of our tournaments. A copy of our Tournament Rules is printed below. If you have additional questions, please ask one of the tournament directors at our tournaments, or you can email the president of the WSCF, [Bob Patterson-Sumwalt](#) bob@wisconsinscholasticchess.org or call 262-573-5624.



Tournament Rules

WSCF chess tournaments shall be conducted in accordance with the rules of the United States Chess Federation. The following rules are included here to answer frequently asked questions and to remind players of useful information. They are not intended to supersede or modify anything in the USCF Rulebook. Penalties for rules violations are at the discretion of the TD and may vary from warnings and time penalties to forfeitures and expulsion from the tournament.

1. Tournament Directors (TD) – Tournament Directors will be on the tournament floor at all times to assist you in the event of any problem or question. To summon a director raise your hand, pause the chess clock and keep your hand in the air until a TD comes to assist you. Remember that a TD will generally not interfere with your game. It is up to you to make a claim. If you think that a TD has ruled incorrectly concerning your game, you should ask for another TD and make an appeal immediately.

2. Clocks and Time Controls – Analog clocks should be set at 5:30 for rounds that are G30 and at 5:15 for rounds that are G45. The game must be either won or drawn before the flag falls at 6:00. If both flags have fallen the game is a draw, providing one of the players in the game claims the flag-fall before checkmate or stalemate is played and recognized. If a time delay clock is used, it must be set with the time delay in force from move one. When using the time delay feature, subtract 5 minutes from the time control, with a five second “delay”, or “Bronstein.” All players are encouraged to bring a clock to the tournament. The player with Black may choose which clock to use. A digital clock with time delay set is preferable to any other clock. If Black fails to bring a clock, Whites clock will be used. If neither player brings a clock, WSCF may provide a clock. Players may request exemption from clock use if they have a medically necessary reason (such as ADHA).

3. Reporting Results – Upon completion of the game, the players should raise their hands to summon a director. They should not disturb the board in any way before the TD has verified the result. After the result has been verified they should make their way to the scorer’s table to mark their scores. It is the responsibility of both players, not just the winner, to mark the result of the game.



4. Touch Move – If you intentionally touch a piece when it is your turn to move, that piece must be moved if you can do so legally. If you intentionally touch an enemy piece when it is your turn to move, the enemy piece must be captured if you can do so legally. You must clearly say “I adjust” before touching a piece if you want to adjust that piece on the board. You may do so only when it is your turn. You may not touch any pieces on the board when it is not your turn.

5. Illegal Moves – If it is discovered that one of either player’s last 10 moves was illegal, the position will be reinstated to what it was before the illegal move, and the game shall continue by applying the touch-move rule to the move replacing the illegal move. Clocks will not be reset. Two minutes will be added to the remaining time of the opponent of the player who made the illegal move. The player must call an illegal move. The TD will not do so, neither may parents, coaches, nor other spectators.

6. Check – Announcing check is not necessary. It is the responsibility of the opponent to notice the check. A player who does not notice the check may suffer serious consequences (see the touch-move rule).

7. Notation - Recording of chess notation is required for all USCF sections and WSCF K-8, & K-12 for all games G30 and over. In WSCF K-5, chess notation is required on boards 1-10 for all games G30 and over. Although strongly encouraged, the recording of chess notation is not required in for other boards in WSCF K-5. However, those not keeping score give up the right to claim draws requiring the corroboration of a score sheet. Players may stop taking notation if either players time runs under 5 minutes.

8. Time Forfeits – Only a player may claim a time forfeit. If both players times have expired, the game will be declared a draw. No parent, coach, spectator, or TD may make such a claim or bring the fall of a flag to the attention of the players.

9. Sections - TD reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to combine sections if there are not sufficient number of participants by 8:45AM on the day of the Tournament to at least hold a round robin (i.e. for a 6 round tournament there must be at least 7 participants). However, trophies and medals shall be awarded to the participants as if they had played in the section that they originally signed up for.

10. Late Arrivals – A player who is more than 30 minutes late for any round loses the game by forfeit and will not be paired for the next round unless reinstated by the Chief TD. To prevent as many unplayed games as possible the TD will try to repair players on the floor in round one. White’s clock should be started as soon as the TD announces that the round has begun. Black’s clock may not be started before White has made a move. If a clock is not available at the start of a round, any elapsed time before one becomes available will be split between players. If both players are late for the start of a round, the first to arrive must split the elapsed time before starting the clock.

11. Draws – If you want to offer a draw to your opponent, you should do so after you make a move but before you start your opponent’s clock. Your opponent may decline the draw by saying so or by moving a piece. A draw offer is valid until it is turned down by the opponent. If both players agree to a draw, then the game is over regardless of previous checkmate, stalemate or illegal positions. A reasonably complete and accurate score sheet is required to claim a draw by triple occurrence of position or the 50-move rule. If such a claim is found to be incorrect, two minutes will be added to the opponent’s remaining time.

12. Pairings – The WinTD Pairing Program will be used for this tournament. Players will generally be paired with other players who have the same score each round. Players should not be assigned the same color three times in a row unless there is no other way to pair the score group or unless necessary to equalize colors. Every reasonable effort will be made to avoid pairing together players from the same school. One exception is the last round when all players in the top group are from the same school. In this case, they may be paired together. If you believe there is a pairing error, report it to a TD immediately! Once the round starts, it will probably be too late to make any changes. Parents and coaches should check the correctness of the cross table posting (including the team cross table) every round. Errors in scores reported after 2 or more rounds will most likely not be corrected.



13. Conduct of Players – Please try to keep as quiet as possible on the tournament floor so that you do not disturb other players. You may not speak to anyone while your game is in progress unless a TD has agreed to be present. If there is a problem of any kind during your game, do not discuss or argue with your opponent, call a TD immediately. If you wait until after your game is over the result probably cannot be changed even if your claim was correct. Be careful what you sign; once you have marked your score and agreed to the result on it, it cannot be adjudicated later on. You may not consult notes, chess books, computers, or other materials during the game. You may not bring soda into the tournament hall at any time. If you need to go to the bathroom while your game is in progress, you must use the bathrooms designated for tournament players. You do not need to ask permission from the TD for this. You may not leave the tournament room during your game. Exceptions can be made only if you have permission and are accompanied by a TD.

14. Half-Point Byes – Half-point byes will be available for the any round except the last round, if requested with an advance entry. 0-point byes shall be available for all rounds. The Chief TD shall have the ability to grant a half point bye for any round on unusual circumstances, except the last round.

15. Playing Area -- 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, but they must leave the playing area when the games begin, or at the discretion of a TD. In some schools parents are allowed to watch games from a viewing area typically bleachers or chairs in the playing area.

16. Interference – No interference in any game by spectators, other players, coaches or parents will be tolerated. Penalties include expulsion from the tournament. Only the player involved should point out irregularities to a TD. This should be done by raising your hand to summon a TD.

17. Team – This is a team and individual event. A team may have as many players as desired, but only the top four scores count for team results and tie breaks. A team must have at least two players in a section to be eligible for team awards in that section. A team in general can only consist of members that attend that school as their primary school of attendance. Schools that meet for one day and are supplementary to their principal school of attendance can not constitute a team. There are two exceptions to the above guidelines: 1) Home schooled students who participate in a home school organization for social and other educational purposes can be on a team. 2) Schools that are feeder schools in to other schools can have students be members on the team in which they will someday attend. An example might be Whitefish Bay Middle School students could be part of a team from Whitefish Bay High School. Another example might be that students from Wilson Elementary may play on a team with students from Steffan Middle School. Parents and coaches should check for correctness of team membership based on the posted team results. Errors in team assignments not reported before the end of round 6 (or 5 in a 5 round tournament) will not be corrected after those rounds are completed.

18. Tiebreak – Individual ties for trophies will be broken by Modified Median, Solkoff, Cumulative, Cumulative of Opposition, head-to-head, most blacks, and then a coin toss, in that order. In some WSCF tournaments especially those with a scholarship being awarded, a tiebreak playoff may be played after the last round.