

US Chess Rule 20M – Coaches & Spectators

Quick Reference Guide

(Based on the US Chess Official Rules of Chess, Rule 20M)

20M1 – Spectators Have No Special Privileges

- Spectators do not have the right to remain near any particular game.
- If a player's concern about a spectator is reasonable, the Tournament Director (TD) may require the spectator to move.
- Repeated complaints about the same spectator may result in removal from the playing area.

20M2 – Spectators Who Are Also Players

- Players who have games in progress may watch nearby games.
- However, the rights of players actively competing take priority over those of spectators.
- The TD decides how to resolve conflicts.

20M3 – Ongoing Problems

- If the same spectators or players repeatedly create distractions, the TD may:
 - Assign different boards.
 - Separate players.
 - Use other reasonable solutions to maintain fair playing conditions.

20M4 – Prohibited Spectator Conduct

Spectators **must not**:

- Discuss a player's position.
- Give advice or coaching.
- Comment on time management.
- Tell a player it is their move.
- Speak loudly enough to distract players.

Such behavior may result in immediate removal from the tournament area.

20M5 – Parents and Coaches

Parents and coaches:

- ✓ May quietly report an irregularity to the Tournament Director.
- ✓ Must do so without the players noticing.
- ✗ May **not** make claims or appeals on behalf of a player.
- ✗ May **not** intervene during a game.

If a player has a rules issue, **the player should stop both clocks (when appropriate) and call the TD.**

20M6 – Where Coaches Should Stand

To avoid any appearance of coaching:

- Coaches, parents, relatives, and close friends should stand **behind** the player they are watching.
- They should avoid positions where the player can easily see them.

Coaches: At a Glance

Permitted

- ✓ Watch games quietly
- ✓ Report irregularities privately to the TD
- ✓ Analyze games after they are over

Not Permitted

- ✗ Give advice during play
- ✗ Signal moves (verbally or nonverbally)
- ✗ Warn about time
- ✗ Point out illegal moves
- ✗ Tell a player it is their move
- ✗ Make claims on behalf of a player

Source: US Chess Federation, *Official Rules of Chess*, 7th Edition, Rule 20M – *Behavior of Spectators*. The official rulebook and free downloadable chapters are available from the US Chess website.