

Upon opening a chess set, a player usually finds a sheet or small booklet outlining rules on how the pieces move. As he or she goes along in a career as a chess competitor, it is required that one become thoroughly familiar with the rules of tournament play. Members of the U.S. Chess Federation usually buy a copy of the official rulebook which covers all aspects of play and organization in chess tournaments. Failure to follow the rules of tournament play can incur sanctions of various types which may include loss of time on a chess clock up to loss of a game or expulsion from a tournament for serious infractions. But most of the rules violations are minor and require only corrections.

In the upcoming tournament, we will be following the U.S Chess Federation Official Rules of Chess, 5<sup>th</sup> edition, with some minor, but appropriate, variations. The event will not be rated by the USCF. Some leeway will be granted to the players considering that, for many, this will be their first event. Below are some of the rules we will be following. As issues arise in the tournament, other more complex rules may be applied. However, they will be considered on a case-by-case basis. The ruling of the tournament director will be considered final. All relevant information will be considered before application of rules or sanctions.

## Rules of the Tournament

- 1. Touch-Move Rule:** We will apply this simple rule. If you touch a piece, you must move that piece. If you touch an opponent's piece, you must capture it. If no legal move can be made by the touched piece, then the player will be allowed to make a legal move.
- 2. J'adoube rule:** If a player wishes to rearrange a piece on a square, to center it for example, he may do so on his own move. He cannot rearrange pieces on the opponent's move. The player is required to say, "I adjust" to inform his opponent that he is adjusting the piece. He may also use the French term, "j'adoube" when he adjusts the piece. If he does not use either of these phrases, he may be deemed to have violated the touch move rule by his opponent.
- 3. Illegal moves:** In a tournament using chess clocks, when illegal moves are made by a player, two minutes are added to the opponent's clock. Since we will not be using chess clocks for the event, we will only correct the error. It is up to the player to notice if the illegal move was made. The position will be corrected to go back to the situation where the illegal move was made. Illegal moves may include failing to move out of check and moving another piece, castling improperly, moving a piece differently from its given type (for example, moving a knight like a bishop), moving a king into check, moving a pawn an incorrect number of squares.
- 4. Completion of a move:** A move is completed when the player removes his hand from a piece after placing the piece on a square. He may not take a move back.
- 5. Talking:** You may not talk or chat with your opponent during a game. Doing so distracts other players around you and affects their ability to conduct their games. You may, however, speak quietly and briefly to offer a draw to your opponent or when adjusting a piece. You may also quietly announce "checkmate" or "mate" to note the end of the game. You may not talk to other team members or to your coach during your game. When you are finished with your game, you must go to another area in order speak with your opponent and analyze the game.
- 6. Writing down moves:** Normally, players are required to write their moves down during a tournament game. By doing this, the player has evidence if an illegal position has occurred, if a draw by repetition of position or the 50 move rule has taken place, or if an opponent has exceeded a time limit. It is also good practice to write down your moves so that you can go over the game with your opponent, your coach, or by yourself to see if you could have improved your play. A score sheet can be an invaluable tool to replay the game to find mistake patterns and prepare for future games. It is similar to having a football coach going over game film to note mistakes and patterns or tendencies of his team or the other team. Unfortunately, we will be under some time constraints. While we will encourage players to write their moves down on a score sheet, we will not require it. Players who write down their moves can do so using either algebraic or descriptive notation.
- 7. Check:** Calling "check" when you put an opponent's king is attacked is not necessary. It is considered a little rude and distracting. It is the responsibility of the player to notice when he is in check. If he fails to do so, he may face dire

consequences. One gets out of check by one of three ways: moving the king, blocking the check with another piece, or capturing the attacking piece. If the king cannot move out of check, then the game ends in a checkmate.

8. **Draws:** A well-played game may result in a draw or tie. Draws may occur through agreement by the two players. The player offering the draw must do so on his own move. If he offers the draw on his opponent's move, it is illegal, but he cannot retract the offer. The opponent may accept the offer, politely reject it, or move a piece indicating that he is rejecting the draw offer. A draw is also possible if a position is repeated three or more times on the board. The player claiming the draw must do so on his move; his move must be one that causes the position to be repeated. He should get the tournament director to make the claim and observe the move which is to be played. A draw may also occur if fifty moves in a row by either Black and White where no piece is captured or pawn is moved. Usually a score sheet is necessary to make both of the above claims. Another draw is possible if a king is placed into "stalemate." That means that the king is not in check, has no legal move of the king, and that no other pawn or piece can move. This often happens when the king is alone, his pawns are blocked, but the other side has cut off the only square to which the king can move. This happens frequently in scholastic events but rarely in high level events.

9. **Repeated draw offers:** It is considered rude and annoying to the opponent to continually offer draws. The tournament director may apply penalties.

10. **Decisive game:** The game ends when one of the players is checkmated by the opponent. A game may also end when one player resigns. In ordinary tournament that use chess clocks, a game ends when one of the opponents fails to make the time control or his time runs out. We call this a "flag fall." Only a player in the game may call a "flag."

11. **Annoying or distracting the opponent:** Attempting to distract or annoy your opponent during a game can have significant consequences up to and including the loss of the game and in a team event loss of a match. Serious infractions can lead to expulsion from the tournament. Annoying behavior can include tapping on the table, making noise, humming or singing during a game, banging the pieces or clock, eating noisy food during a game, throwing objects at the opponent, kicking your opponent under the table, adjusting pieces on your opponent's move, repeated draw offers, making gestures toward your opponent, or trash talking before, during, or after the game. This list is not exclusive. The tournament director has wide discretion under the rules to apply penalties. In scholastic events, penalties may also be applied by the school for infractions at the tournament just as it would in any other sport.

12. **Behavior of spectators:** No one is permitted to talk or make noise during the match. Spectators are not permitted to point out rule infractions, call time or the "flag" on a chess clock, talk to team members, talk on a phone, or in any way annoy or distract the players. Spectators can be ejected from the room at the order of the tournament director. Essentially, spectators have no rights to intrude or affect the play. Harsh team penalties may be applied.

13. **Marking results:** You are required to mark your result on the pairing sheet immediately at the completion of your game. The team sheet will be provided for you to mark the result. You will write 1 for a win,  $\frac{1}{2}$  for a draw, and 0 for a loss on this sheet. The team captains should check the sheet for accuracy and fill in the final score for each side. These sheets will be picked up by the tournament director or assistant at the end of each match. One of the captains should raise his/her hand when a match has been completed.

14. **Rules of tournament etiquette:** It is a common courtesy to do the following during a chess game. You shake hands before and after a game to show sportsmanship. You do not display your joy at winning or disappointment at losing a game. Being a sore loser or a poor winner spoils the enjoyment of the competition for the other players. We know how tough it is to lose. Crying is not acceptable. Neither is running around the room showing how happy you are.

Other rules may be applied as necessary. Since we are not using clocks, any unfinished games at the end of 45 minutes will be adjudicated by the tournament director. The decision will be fair but final.