

# SACA Scholastic Chess League Rules (rev. 9/05)

These rules apply only to league matches and regional qualifier events that are not USCF rated events. For USCF rated events, the current edition of the USCF Official Rules of Chess supercedes these rules when these rules conflict with the USCF Official Rules of Chess. We are **guests** at the schools or hotels where these tournaments are held. Please treat the school or hotel better than you treat your own home since we are guests and would like to be able to hold future events there.

NOTE: It is the player's responsibility to know the rules, and the coach's responsibility to see to it that their players are well prepared regarding the rules. Whenever a player has a question about any rule, the player should raise their hand and any question will be answered. It is important that the players call the TD immediately whenever they have a problem, or wish to make a claim. Doing so after the game is over is too late. They also may request their coaches' presence to help explain or ease a problem.

- 1. Role of the Tournament Director (TD):** The TD will use the current edition of the USCF Official Rules of Chess to cover all aspects of running the tournament except where specified below. A coach or player may appeal any floor TD's decision to the Chief TD of the tournament. Should a coach or player wish to appeal a ruling of the Chief TD, an appeals committee of 3 knowledgeable people shall be formed. No further appeal will be accepted. The job of the committee is not to make a ruling, but to determine if the TD's ruling was a legal one.
- 2. Kibitzing:** Kibitzing is any outside interference (verbal or otherwise, deliberate or not) that could alter a player's game strategy or the outcome of the game. In all cases of kibitzing, or attempted kibitzing, the TD shall decide the appropriate penalty, which includes but not limited to, a warning, game forfeiture, player expulsion, or deduction of a team point.
- 3. Speaking with coach during round:** If a player wishes to consult with his coach about team or individual standings, in the last round only, the player may do so after notifying a TD. The coach, under TD supervision, may supply information pertaining to team or individual standings (ex: How a draw would affect the standings.) or to relate results. The coach may not comment on the player's game itself or other games still in progress, nor may the coach advise the player on what action to take. Once the game is started, the player may not talk to anyone else except the TD or the opponent of the game.
- 4. Watching other games:** When a player or coach wishes to watch a player's game, they may do so only for a short period of time (1 minute or less). Furthermore they must position themselves in such a way that does not distract either player and must also position themselves from **behind** their players. Frequent returning to watch a game or crowding will not be permitted.
- 5. While player is not at board:** A player may get up from their game, without permission, to walk around, go to the rest room, or even watch other games, as long as no rules are violated.

6. **Distractions**: Players have the right, within reason, to be free of distractions while they are playing their game. This right supersedes the rights of other players or coaches to watch games in the tournament hall or at a close distance.

7. **Touch-Move Rule**: When the player on turn touches their piece with the intent of moving it, and can legally do so, that piece must be moved. If the player on turn touches an opponent's piece with the intent of capturing it, and can legally do so, that piece must be captured. Touching an opponent's piece with one's own piece is considered touching the piece. In the case in which a touched piece may not be legally moved or captured, then the player on turn is free to make any legal move. Once a player has released their piece upon a square, their move is completed. If playing with a clock, the move is determined upon its release to a square, and the move is completed when the player presses the clock.

A player may say "Adjust" prior to or simultaneously to touching a piece to allow the player to touch the pieces without having to move or capture them in accordance to the Touch-Move Rule. When castling you should either touch both the rook and the king at the same time or touch the King first.

#### 8. **The Clock**:

**a) In General**: A player or coach may request that a clock be put on the game. A clock must be used if there is one available. No player can refuse the use of a clock unless the clock is substandard. A player must press the clock with the same hand used to make the move. The TD may give a penalty after repeated warnings. The player should not touch the clock for any other reason. If a clock is added late, the spent time is divided equally between the players with both sides receiving a minimum of 10 minutes.

**b) Time Delay**: A clock with time delay capability must be set with a delay in accordance with standard USCF rules. Example: Game/40 will be set at 40 minutes with a 5 second time delay.

**c) Late Arrival**: If one player arrives late to a game in which a clock is started, that player loses the time that they were absent. A player who does not arrive within 30 minutes (or earlier at the TD discretion if announced before the first round) of the actual start of the round forfeits the game. For the first round in an individual tournament, re-pairings may occur immediately after the start of the round rather than waiting for a forfeit win. In a team tournament there may be no opponent because of a team playing short of a player so a player without an opponent may be sent to the "Individual Section" instead of a forfeit win. The player winning on forfeit must report the result as a forfeit win (1F-0F or 0F-1F). Any player who forfeits without notice will not be paired for future rounds unless reinstated by the Chief TD. If you are unavoidably delayed contact the TD room as early as possible.

**d) Making a claim**: A player may only make a claim on the clock if their flag is still up. Only the players are allowed to make a claim on the clock, except as mentioned in Rule 14c below. A player may claim a win on time if the player has sufficient material to construct a mate. If the player doesn't have mating material, a player may claim a draw on time. Either player may claim

the game drawn if both flags are down and it is a Sudden Death time control. If a player claims a win on time, but fails to stop the clock before his own flag falls, the game is drawn.

9. **Illegal move**: If a player makes an illegal move during a sudden death time control, the TD shall add 2 minutes to the opponent's clock. If a player makes an illegal move and it is not a sudden death time control then no time adjustment will be made. If the move is made in sudden death time pressure, the illegal move must be corrected before the opponent who made the illegal move makes two moves or it stands with no piece or time adjustment.

10. **Summoning a TD**: If a player wishes to summon a TD, in addition to raising their hand, the player should stop the clock and wait for the TD to arrive. However, if the TD determines that the stoppage of play was without a valid reason, 2 minutes or half the remaining time, whichever is less, shall be deducted from the player's clock.

11. **Non-Progression**: If a player feels their opponent is trying to win on the clock, and is making no attempt to win on the board, the player may call a TD and ask to claim a draw on that basis. The game will be resumed under the TD's observation, and if after a reasonable amount of time the TD agrees to the claim, the game shall be stopped and adjudicated a draw. If a clock with time delay capability is used and set for the required time delay on each move, this rule is not in effect.

12. **The 50-Move Rule**: The game is drawn when the player on the move claims a draw and demonstrates that the last 50 consecutive moves have been made by each side without any capture or pawn move.

13. **Triple Occurrence of Position**: The game is drawn upon a claim by the player on move when the same position is about to appear for at least the third time or has just appeared for at least the third time, the same player being on move each time. The player claiming the draw must announce to his opponent their next move and stop the clock to claim the draw by three move repetition. If the player claiming a draw makes his move and hits the clock the claim may not be made until his next turn.

14. **Non-Interference**: No parent, teammate, coach, or spectator may step in to interfere with the progress of a game. A TD may interfere only if summoned by one or both of the players, or if one of the following exceptions occur:

**a) No mate possible**: A TD may adjudicate a game to be a draw, if the position is non-mateable; i.e., there exists no material for any possible mate. Examples of a non-mateable position include Knight and King vs. King.

**b) Move counter**: A TD may, at his discretion, introduce to the game a move-counter who will monitor the game's progress and claim a draw if the 50-Move Rule occurs. A TD may also put a clock on a game, if one becomes available during the course of the game. A coach or player may inform a TD of a game that may require a counter or clock to be added.

**c) Flag down not recognized:** A TD may halt the game in which both flags are down and the game has continued for an unreasonable amount of time (in other words, the players clearly don't understand the purpose of the clock.). The game shall be adjudicated a draw.

**d) Rules clarification:** A TD may give instructive aid to players who are clearly confused about the rules or procedures.

**e) Player conduct:** A TD will intervene if the TD witnesses blatant cheating by a player, such as receiving advice, intentionally rearranging the pieces, bullying an opponent, or other similar or unsportsmanlike behaviors. A TD must not make a ruling on a game that involves players they coach or games they have an outside interest in. If a TD sees such a game that needs a ruling, he must notify the nearest available alternate TD.

15. **Insufficient losing chances:** If it is your move and you have less than 5 minutes left in the time control, and you are not already using the time delay on your game, you may stop both clocks and summon a TD to claim this type of draw. This is also a draw offer, which your opponent may accept or reject. If the TD believes your claim is wrong or frivolous you will lose a minute from your clock and could lose on time. The director has the option of either watching for progress or inserting a delay-mode clock in which case the game continues with the following settings: the claimant has half his remaining time (maximum 1 minute), the opponent retains all his time and both have a 5-second delay/increment for each move. This rule does not apply if time delay is being used in the game.

16. **Equipment preference:** The player with black has the choice of equipment including clocks as long as they are tournament legal according to the USCF Rules of Chess. One exception is that clocks with a 5-second time delay in effect are preferred over any others if there is a sudden death time control in effect for the tournament. A player who arrives after the clock is started has lost this choice of equipment.

17. **Offering a draw:** If you want to offer a draw, you should do so immediately after making your move but before starting your opponent's clock. Your opponent may refuse the draw verbally or by making a move. You can't take back a draw offer and it remains in effect until your opponent moves or otherwise declines it. The game is over if both players agree to a draw or if a flag falls and is called down before the draw is clearly agreed.

18. **Conclusion of game:** A game is concluded when both players agree to the outcome. This agreement may supersede the actual position on the board. After reporting your results do not go back into the playing area until ready to start the next round. Also, there is no analysis or skittles allowed in the playing area. There are **NO ELIMINATIONS** in chess tournaments. If the tournament has three rounds, then you will play 3 games. If you need to leave early or miss a game, tell your coach or parent coordinator who must then notify a TD.

**a) Agreement to results:** At the end of your game, before shaking hands or starting to rearrange the pieces, make SURE you understand to what you are agreeing. Is your opponent resigning or offering you a draw??

**b) Reporting results:** In a team tournament you must report your results to your coach or parent coordinator. For an individual tournament both you and your opponent need to go to the results table after the game to report your results.

19. **Round Times:** Except for the first game, nobody knows exactly what time the rounds will start unless round times are included in the pre-tournament publicity. Sometimes a rough guess can be made but you can't count on a precise time. You should avoid leaving the tournament site for lunch or other reasons if you can.

**ABOVE ALL, REMEMBER: CHESS IS SUPPOSED TO BE FUN.** 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, using your scoresheet, and see where you could have improved. Don't let losing get you down-there will always be other opportunities.