

APPENDIX A-1: US CHESS SCHOLASTIC BLITZ RULES

Last updated January 2018

1. **Blitz will be played using Touch-Move rules**, not “Clock-Move.” Therefore, if a player touches one piece, then moves another and presses the clock, the opponent may press the player’s clock to force the player to move the piece touched, or may stop the clock to claim a violation. A penalty may be assessed.
2. One “round” of Blitz chess consists of 2 games, one played with the White pieces, the other played with the Black pieces (and vice-versa for the opponent). White first goes to the player whose name appears on the left-hand side of the Pairing Sheet.
3. Pairings will be made using the higher of each player’s US Chess Regular and Blitz ratings as listed in the Rating Supplement used for the main tournament. Established ratings take precedence over provisional ratings. If a player has no US Chess Regular or Blitz rating, but has a rating in another over-the-board rating system, the Chief TD has the option to follow procedures specified in 28D and 28E of the Rules of Chess to assign the player a rating. If a player receives an assigned rating, it will be used for pairings and prize eligibility.
4. Each player must make all of their moves in the five minutes allotted on his clock. Time delay feature will not be used.
5. All the clocks must either have a special device, usually called a flag, or be a digital clock.
 - a. Whatever clock is used, analog or digital, the clock must continue to run for both sides even if one side’s time has expired.
 - b. A digital timer (given it meets the requirements of 5a) is preferred over an analog clock.
 - c. If Black and White have equivalent clocks (e.g. both analog or both digital), then the player with Black chooses the clock provided that player is at the board when the round begins.
6. Before play begins both players should inspect the position of their pieces and the setting of the clock, since once each side has made a move all claims for correcting either are null and void. The only exception is if one or both players have more than five minutes on their clock, then the tournament director (TD) may reduce the time accordingly.
 - a. If the King and Queen are set up incorrectly, it is legal to castle short on the Queenside and long on the Kingside.
 - b. If an illegal position is created or an illegal move made without the opponent making a claim, the position stands and a claim not allowed when the opponent has determined the next move (e.g. has released their piece on its destination square).
7. Each player must press the clock button with the same hand used to move the pieces. This rule also applies to castling and capturing.
8. The TD may state at the start of the event the direction the clocks are to face. The player with the Black pieces then chooses which side of the table on which to sit.
9. Except for pushing the clock button, neither player should touch the clock except:
 - a. To straighten it.
 - b. If either player knocks over the clock, the opponent gets one minute added to their clock.
 - c. If your opponent's clock does not start you may push the opponent’s side down and re-start your side; however, if this procedure is unsatisfactory, please call for a TD.
 - d. Each player must always be allowed to push their clock after moving. Neither player should keep their hand on, or hovering over, the clock. ***Moving with one hand and pressing the clock with the other hand is not allowed.***

10. Defining a win.
 - a. A game is won by the player:
 - 1) Who has mated their opponent's King.
 - 2) Whose opponent resigns.
 - 3) Whose opponent's flag falls first, at any time before the game is otherwise ended, provided the player makes a valid claim and neutralizes the clock while their own flag is still up and has mating material.
 - 4) Who, after an illegal move, takes the opponent's King (if the King is in check) or claims the win and stops the clock.
 - b. An illegal move does not negate a player's right to claim on time, provided the player makes the claim before the opponent's claim of an illegal move. If the claims are simultaneous the player who made the illegal move loses.
 - c. Either two minor pieces (except K vs K+N+N), a Pawn, a Rook or a Queen is sufficient mating material.
11. Defining a draw.
 - a. A game is a draw:
 - 1) If one of the Kings is stalemated, even if a flag fall is claimed simultaneously.
 - 2) By agreement between the players during the game only.
 - 3) If the flag of one player falls after the flag of the other player has already fallen and a win has not been claimed, unless either side mates before noticing both flags down. Checkmate nullifies any later time claims.
 - 4) If one player has insufficient mating material (see 10c above) when the opponent's flag falls or makes an illegal move.
 - b. To claim a draw by perpetual check, a three-time repetition is necessary with the player counting 1, 2, 3, out loud so as to make it quite clear and easier for the TDs to assist. The claimant should stop the clock after the third repetition.
 - c. "Insufficient Losing Chances" (ILC) claims will be allowed only under the following conditions:
 - 1) If both players each have just one identical piece and if neither side can show a forced win.
 - 2) In K+Bishop vs K+Bishop and the Bishops are of opposite colors, with only one Pawn on the board, provided that no forced win can be demonstrated.
 - 3) K+Rook Pawn vs K can be claimed as a draw once the defender's King is on the Rook file in front of the Pawn. K+Pawn vs K can be claimed as a draw once the defender is on the square directly in front of the Pawn, as long as the Pawn is not on the 7th rank.
 - 4) K+R+Rook Pawn vs K+R is a draw if the Pawn is blockaded by the King and there is no immediate win demonstrated.
12. If a player accidentally displaces one or more pieces, the player shall replace them on their own time. If it is necessary, the opponent may start the offending player's clock without making a move in order to make sure that the culprit uses their own time while replacing the pieces.
13. It is unsportsmanlike conduct to knock over any pieces then punch the clock. For the **first offense** claimed by a player, the opponent will **receive a warning** from the TD. If the claimant's flag fell while any of the opponent's pieces are laying on the board the claimant will receive one minute of time on the clock). For a **second offense** the TD will **add one minute to the claimant's clock**. For a **third offense** the offender shall **lose the game**.

14. In case of a dispute either player may stop the clock to summon a TD. In any unclear situation the TD will consider the testimony of both players and any reliable witnesses before rendering a decision. If a player wishes to appeal the decision of a TD, the player must first appeal to the Section Chief. Then, if necessary, the player may appeal to the Chief TD whose decision in all cases is final.
15. The TD shall not pick up the clock; except in the case of a dispute.
16. Spectators and players in other games are not to speak or otherwise interfere in a game. If a spectator interferes in any way, such as by calling attention to the flag fall or pointing out an illegal move, the TD may cancel the game and rule that a new game be played. The TD may also expel the offending party from the playing room. If the offending party is participating in the event, penalties at the discretion of the TD may be assessed up to expulsion from the event.
17. When a clearly drawn position is reached (see Rule 11), either player may pause the clock and appeal to the TD for a draw.
 - a. If the TD rules a draw, the game is over.
 - b. If the TD denies the claim, the TD will impose a one minute penalty (or half the remaining time if less than two minutes remain) to the clock of the player who made the claim.
18. Illegal moves, unnoticed by both players, cannot be corrected afterwards, nor can they become the basis for making a claim. An illegal move is completed when the player presses the clock, whereupon the opponent may claim a win.
19. Moving the King next to another King is illegal. If this move occurs, the player making the move loses the game if the opponent makes a proper claim.
20. If a player promotes a Pawn and the desired promotion piece is not available, the player has the right to pause the clock to retrieve the desired promotion piece.
21. Only a TD may determine if a clock is defective and change the clock once the game begins.
22. Excessive banging of pieces or clock will not be tolerated. The offending player may be penalized with loss of time.
23. Each player is responsible for coming to the game with a clock. If neither player has a clock, then both players will receive a forfeit loss for both games. All players are required to know how to operate their clock and how to make any changes to the clock that may be necessary during a game.
24. Until superseded, the current edition of the Official Rules of Chess and the current online edition of “Rulebook Changes” shall be used to resolve any situation not covered by these Scholastic Blitz Rules.