

2019 National K-12 Grade Chess Championships - Tournament Rules

Note: Posted procedures at the site supersede these published procedures.

The 2019 National Scholastic K-12 Grade Chess Championships are sanctioned by the United States Chess Federation and conducted by its rules. The 6th Edition of the U.S. Chess Federation's Official Rules of Chess, as amended, and the USCF National Scholastic Chess Tournament Regulations are the basis for all the rules and regulations. We include the following rules here to answer players, parents and coaches most frequently-asked questions, to highlight changes that are different than the rule book, and to remind players of useful information.

Tournament Directors (TDs)

TDs will be on the tournament floor at all times to assist players in the event of any problem or question. To summon a director, raise your hand and keep it 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 a TD has ruled incorrectly concerning your game, you should ask for another TD and make an appeal immediately.

Clocks and Time Controls

The time control is game-in-90 minutes with 5-second delay (G/90, d5). Digital clocks with delay capability must have the 5-second delay set. Analog clocks should be set at 4:30. The game must be either won or drawn before the flag falls at 6:00. The player whose flag falls first loses the game unless the opponent has insufficient mating material or both flags have fallen. In either of those exceptions, the game is drawn. ***The TD will tell you which way to face your clock.*** A digital clock with time delay set is preferable to any other clock. Therefore, if White has such a clock available and Black does not, White's clock should be used. 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, set the clocks at 90 minutes, or 1 hour and 30 minutes with a five-second "delay," or "Bronstein".

Start of the Game

White's clock must 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 evenly 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.

Recording Moves

Except for the Kindergarten and 1st grade sections, each player is required to record the moves, move after move. Neither player is required to keep score if either player has less than five minutes at the end of the game.

Electronic Devices

Players must not have on their person in the playing area any cell phone, smart watch, tablet, laptop, or other Internet-enabled device, unless a prior written exception has been granted by the Director of Events. If such a device is brought into the playing hall, it must be completely powered off and placed

either on the table, face up, or closed in a bag that is not opened until the game is over. **We strongly encourage players to leave their cell phones, smart watches, tablets or other communications devices with their parents and/or coaches.** Any player found in a bathroom with such a device – regardless of intent – may be subject to penalties ranging up to removal from the tournament, at the discretion of the chief TD. If you have a question about whether your device falls under this definition, please ask a tournament director. Please see Section 21.5 of the Scholastic Regulations, as well as the US Chess Electronic Device Policy, for more information.

Electronic Recording Devices (ERD)

ERDs are not permitted at this tournament, unless you have received prior written approval from the Director of Events to use one. Those players using an approved ERD must always play the intended move on the board first, before recording it on the device. ***Further, the ERD must be kept on the table throughout the game; players may not take an ERD outside the tournament hall while a game is in progress. Also, no electronic devices may be taken to the restrooms.*** Failure to follow these procedures may result in penalties, if observed by a TD, even without a claim from the opponent.

Touch-Move

If you intentionally touch a piece when it is your turn, that piece must be moved if you can do so legally. If you intentionally touch an opponent's piece when it is your turn to move, the opponent's 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. If you accidentally release a piece on an unintended but legal square, you must leave it on that square. You may not touch any pieces on the board when it is not your turn.

Illegal Moves

If a player discovers that one of his/her or the opponent's last 10 moves was illegal, the player should summon a tournament director immediately. The TD can reinstate the position 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. If neither player has used one hour, there will be no time penalty assessed for an illegal move. If either player has used one hour, then any illegal move will result in two minutes being added to the opponent of the player making the illegal move. A player must raise his/her hand and claim an illegal move. The TD will not do so; neither may parents, coaches, nor other spectators.

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).

Time Forfeits

Only the players involved in a game may claim a Time Forfeit in that game. No parent, coach, spectator, other players or TD may make such a claim or bring the fall of a flag to the attention of the players. A player may claim a Time Forfeit only if he/she stops the clocks before the claimant's own time runs out. If both flags are down, the game is a draw.

Late Arrivals

A player who is more than one hour late for a scheduled round loses the game by forfeit and will not be paired for the next round unless reinstated by the Chief TD. The hour is measured from when the round was started. Request for reinstatement, if desired, must be made by the player, coach or parent, to the Chief Tournament Director or Floor Chief.

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, and may not be retracted, until it is accepted or declined by your 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 scoresheet is required to claim a draw by triple occurrence of position or under the 50-move rule. If such a claim is found to be incorrect, two minutes will be added to the opponent's remaining time.

Claims of Insufficient Losing Chances

No claim of insufficient losing chances can be made if time delay is already in force on the clock being used. However, if the game clock cannot be set in delay mode, a player on the move who has no more than two minutes left may stop the clock and ask the TD to declare the game a draw on the grounds that the player has insufficient losing chances. Such a claim is also a draw offer. The TD may, at his discretion, place a digital clock, set with time-delay at five seconds, on the game. If this is done, the claimant gets half of his remaining time up to but not exceeding one minute, while the opponent's time is not adjusted and the game continues until a result is achieved. If the claim is obviously correct, the TD should grant the draw. If the claim is obviously incorrect, the TD may deduct up to one minute from the claimant's time and the game should continue. If the claim is unclear, but no time-delay clock is available to insert on the game, the TD may reserve a decision while he watches the continuation of the game or may ask the players to re-claim after restarting the game.

Analysis of Games

Players may not analyze their games in the tournament room. Analysis should be conducted in the skittles area or elsewhere.

Reporting Results

Immediately upon completion of the game, the players should carefully complete and sign the results sheet at their board, without disturbing the position, and hold the results sheet up in the air until a TD comes to get it. ***Players should not sign the results sheet until the correct result has been recorded!*** ***Both players must remain at their board until a TD takes the results sheet.*** Only after the TD has done so should both players set up the pieces and leave the playing area.

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 players from the same school together. One

exception is the last round when more than half of the players in the top group are from the same school. In this case, some might be paired together. You can find other situations in Paragraph 18.1 of the Scholastic Regulations. 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 wallcharts every round. Errors in scores reported after two or more rounds would most likely not be corrected.

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 you have asked a TD to be present.** If there is a problem of any kind during your game, 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 signed your result sheet, and agreed to the result on it, it is very difficult to change later on. You may not consult notes, chess books, computers, or other materials during the game. You may not bring food or 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 other than to go to the restroom if it is outside the tournament room. Exceptions can be made only if you have permission and are accompanied by a TD.

Half-Point Bye

One half-point bye will be available during any round, if requested by 11am on Friday, the first day of the event. On-site registrations after 11am will receive a ½-point bye for the first round unless otherwise determined by the Chief TD. The Chief TD may grant a ½-point bye during any round, even after the cut-off, for unusual circumstances.

Interference

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

Other Rules

This is an individual tournament with team scoring. In each section, a team may have as many players as desired, but **only the top three scores count for team results and tiebreaks.** A school must have at least two players in a section in order to be eligible for team awards in that section. Players and coaches/parents are responsible for confirming the accuracy of any and all player information.

Penalties

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.

Cell Phones

Cell phone use is not permitted in the tournament hall by the players. ***CELL PHONES MUST BE TURNED OFF IN THE PLAYING HALLS.*** If a cell phone rings, a player will be assessed a time penalty on the first

offense, and loss of game declared for each repeat offense during the tournament. A player using his cell phone for calling, answering a call, sending a text message, or reading text messages while the game is in progress may be forfeited instantly. **We strongly encourage players to leave their cell phones with their parents or coaches.** If a player brings a cell phone into the Playing Hall, it must be turned off and stowed in a back-pack, purse or chess bag for the duration of the game. Once the game begins, the cell phone must remain stowed away. Until the game ends, the player may not carry the cell phone in your hand, pocket or anywhere else. **The player must not take it to the bathroom or anywhere else.** We refer players, parents and coaches to Section 21.5 of the Scholastic Regulations.

What Trophy Did I Win?

In cases of ties, trophies cannot be split. We will use tiebreaks to award both individual and team trophies. Tied individuals and teams are considered Co-Champions for their grade, but will be given trophies based on tie-breaks. For individual trophies, place trophies are awarded before rating class trophies.

Tie-Breaks

Below is the tiebreak order in which individual ties are broken in this event and an explanation of how to calculate the tiebreak total.

Individual ties for trophies are broken by Modified Median, Median, Solkoff, Sonnenborn-Berger, Cumulative, and Coin Flip, in that order. Players can win only one individual trophy. Place trophies take precedence over all other trophy awards. The team tie-breaks are Total Individual Median, Total Solkoff, Total Sonnenborn-Berger, Total Cumulative, and Coin Flip in that order.

1. **Modified Median:** First, the Median system sums the scores of the opponents of the player in the tie and then subtracts the high and low score. The Modified Median system for players with a plus score only removes the lowest opponent's score. For an even score, the highest and lowest opponent scores are removed, while the highest score is removed for those players with a minus score. Please note that opponents' scores are adjusted for unplayed games before being added into the sum. Unplayed game(s) of an opponent are adjusted per rule 34E1 in the rulebook.
2. **Median:** Definition above.
3. **Solkoff:** The Solkoff system is the same as the Median system except no scores are removed.
4. **Sonnenborn-Berger:** The Sonnenborn-Berger system adds the final score of all players they defeated with $\frac{1}{2}$ the sum of the opponents' scores with whom the player drew. Nothing is added for losses or unplayed games. Example: If you beat a player who scored 3 points, drew a player who scored 4 points and lost to a player who scored 5 points, your tiebreak would be 3 for the win, 2 for the draw ($\frac{1}{2}$ of 4) and 0 for the loss for a total of 5 tiebreak points.
5. **Cumulative:** The Cumulative system adds the round-by-round total score of the player. So a win-loss-win would yield $1+1+2$ or four points. One point is subtracted from the total for every unplayed win or one-point bye. One-half point is subtracted from the total for every unplayed draw or half-point bye.

6. Coin Flip